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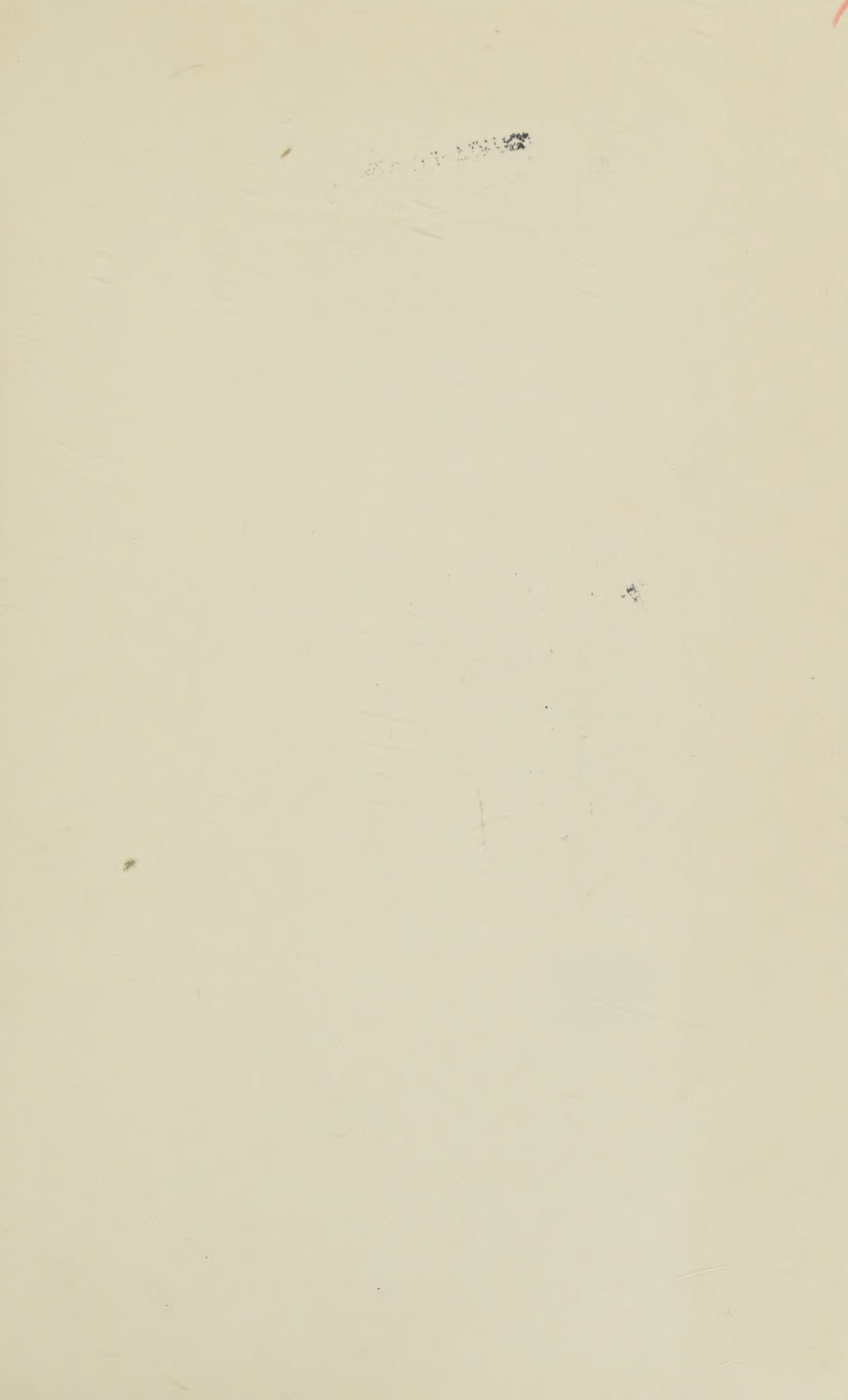
Myrick

The gold rush; letters of Thomas
S. Myrick...


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THE
GOLD
RUSH...

THE GOLD RUSH



*Letters of Thomas S. Myrick
from California to the Jackson,
Michigan, American Citizen
1849-1855*



THE CUMMING PRESS

Mount Pleasant

Michigan

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by John Cumming



Winter in 1849 was an exciting period for the young men of Jackson, Michigan, as it was for men in every settled community throughout the country. It was a time of planning and organizing for the long arduous journey to the gold fields of California, across the plains and mountains, through vast expanses of terrain that was inadequately mapped or explored. Little did it matter to these men that such a trial lay before them; they had leveled their sights on California gold and could see nothing in between.

Jackson, Michigan, at this time was a settled community with two newspapers, a lyceum, schools, and all the appurtenances of Eastern civilization; yet its oldest settler had been in the area scarcely nineteen years. Few of the young men, if any, who were making preparations this winter to emigrate to California had been born in Jackson, or even in Michigan. Most of them had already shared with their parents a long trip from New York State or New England; but such a trip would have been through settled regions seldom beyond the call of a home or a village. What seemed to their parents hardships on this journey would be nothing compared to what they faced.

On February 20, 1849, a notice appeared in the *Jackson Patriot*:

A company is now being formed at Jackson and the surrounding country, for the purpose of emigrating to California. Each member is required to be well armed with a rifle, pistols, &c., and a plentiful supply of ammunition. Each mess will furnish themselves with a team, wagon, tent and other necessities, and take provision sufficient to last during the route. The company will leave Jackson on Monday, the 26th of March, and rendezvous at Jonesville on the 27th. For further particulars, enquire of H. C. Hodge, Pulaski, or at this office.

When the company was finally organized, it was known as the "Central Michigan California Emigrant Company;" and Hiram C. Hodge, of Pulaski, had been chosen captain. The

rendezvous point at Jonesville was selected because that place lay south of Jackson and on the route to the West. Those living in the outlying communities would find it more convenient than meeting in Jackson, only to retrace their steps. On the 29th of March, the *Patriot* noted that Hodge had departed for the "El Dorado," and most of the other members of the company were en route.

There were other companies organized in various communities throughout the state, notably, the Wolverine Rangers of Marshall, the Fayette Rovers of Jonesville, the Pioneer Company of Tecumseh, the Adrian Company, and the Monroe Pioneers. There were also smaller, loosely organized groups, ranging from a few friends who pooled their resources and departed together to a dozen or more men, who agreed to remain together for a specified length of time.

In one of these smaller groups from Jackson was R. Luther Myrick, who left in May with three companions Paul Cross, Ruel C. Baker, and William Monroe. A letter from Luther Myrick written on August 2, 1849, from a point twenty miles beyond the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains, re-assured their friends back home that these four Jackson emigrants were well and that they expected to reach California by the middle of October. Hiram Hodge, who had left Jackson nearly a month before them, was only three days ahead on the trail.

They did not know that Hodge had been taken ill and had been left behind at Fort Laramie by his company. Dr. C. N. Ormsby, of Ann Arbor, in a letter to his wife on June 30, 1849, from Fort Laramie, wrote:

I have just returned from the Fort, two miles distant. I there visited Mr. Hodge, (the sick man from Jackson, of whom I wrote you the other day,) left by his company with no covering but a little, small tent—no bed but his blanket on the ground—no attendant but a young man who was generous enough to remain with him.

R. Luther Myrick and his friends dissolved their partnership at Salt Lake. Cross remained at Salt Lake; Monroe ac-

quired a horse and packed his equipment through; while Luther Myrick and Baker kept the oxen and headed for California over the northern route, through Lassen's Pass.

As will be learned from Myrick's account, this was a nearly disastrous choice. It was a longer trail over deserts, volcanic rubble, and mountains. Myrick was able to get through only with those possessions which he was able to carry on his back. Baker chose to remain behind in the mountains with the Wolverine Rangers in an effort to save the cattle and equipment. At the writing of this letter on December 30, 1849, from San Francisco, the last that Myrick had heard of Baker was that he was still in the snow-choked mountains with the Marshall men and their cattle were all dead. Baker made it through somehow, for two years later he was serving as prosecuting attorney for Butte County.

Luther Myrick had received copies of the Jackson newspapers and several letters from friends when he arrived at San Francisco. From these he learned that his brother Thomas was planning to emigrate to California, and he cautioned his brother about the perils of the trail and gave him advice on equipment and preparations. The advice arrived too late for Thomas to use, however; for by the time the letter had arrived in Jackson, Thomas was in San Francisco, having made the journey by boat via the Isthmus of Panama. A third brother, Milton H. Myrick, would also migrate to California within a few years.

The three Myrick boys were sons of the Reverend Luther Myrick, and they were all born in upstate New York. In May, 1843, the family moved to Michigan, where they settled on a farm in Jackson County. The father died in the following September. Milton, who had learned the printing trade in Cazenovia, New York, went to work as a printer in Jackson, and eventually entered the law. Thomas, at the time of the great emigration in 1849, was teaching school in Jackson. Luther's occupation was also printing.

All three were Whigs and ardent Masons. Thomas, whose letters constitute the bulk of this book, displays his political interests throughout his reporting from California. Two of the letters are written by R. Luther Myrick, while the balance are from Thomas.

The letters were all published in the Jackson *American Citizen* in which Thomas was listed as "correspondent." They extended over a period of two years to 1852, when the excitement of the Gold Rush began to diminish and the attention of the readers was diverted to temperance, the anti-slavery movement, spiritualism, and other matters that were of significance in Jackson.

The letters are addressed to the editors of the *Citizen*, who varied from time to time as ownership of the newspaper changed hands. Throughout, original spelling and capitalization, even when inconsistent, have been retained; only obvious typographical transitions have been corrected. The first date at the beginning of each letter is the publication date of the letter; and the second date indicates when the letter was written.

Of the three Myrick brothers, only Milton has left a record of what ultimately happened to him. Milton upon arriving in San Francisco in 1854 went to work on the *Sun* as a printer, then in 1855 he moved to Shasta, where he assisted in establishing the *Shasta Republican*. In 1857, he resumed his law practice and in 1866 moved to San Francisco to continue that practice. He was nominated and elected an associate Justice of the **Supreme Court of California** in 1879 and served in that capacity for a term of seven years.

Thomas Myrick apparently tired of the search for gold in 1855; for in December of that year he returned to the teaching profession, assuming the duties of principal of the Market Street School in San Francisco. The school, held in the basement rooms of St. Patrick's Church, had but twenty pupils when Myrick took over as principal; but in four months

the enrollment had increased to over two hundred pupils. He remained at this school for four years when the school was discontinued. He was transferred to the principalship of the Union Street School in January 1860.

That he was still at this school eight years later is established because in 1867 he published a pamphlet entitled *Twelve Years of Teaching in the Public Schools of San Francisco* in which he reviewed the growth of the schools during that period. Personnel records of the San Francisco Schools were destroyed in the fires which followed the earthquake in 1906. However, it is known that he served as principal of the Union School until 1869, that he was one of the founders of the California Educational Society and served as its corresponding secretary in 1863, and that he was elected vice president of the society in 1865.

In later years Luther Myrick re-visited Jackson, Michigan, purchased a cemetery lot for his mother, and returned to California, where he was residing in Stockton at the time.

The letters are well-written, for Thomas was an intelligent and literate observer. He covered the Gold Rush well and informed his readers of the other advantages of California, perhaps thus stimulating interest in emigration for reasons other than instant wealth through gold. He also kept the readers back home informed of the activities of other Jackson men who were making the transition from gold-seekers to permanent, productive citizenship in California.

Perhaps this story has already been told; but it is a story that bears re-telling. For the Gold Rush enthusiast, this volume is offered with the assurance that it will be received with interest and appreciation.





American Citizen, Nov. 7, 1849

*Letter from the Rocky Mountains—20 Miles beyond the
South Pass.*

Noon, August 2, 1849.

Dear T.—the long wished for Mormon express having just come into sight, I embrace this opportunity to send you a few lines. Yesterday we made the celebrated pass in the Rocky Mountains. You can little imagine what kind of a time we have of it. If any of our friends in Jackson think of making the journey to California, tell them to go by water by all means. We are now in the regions of perpetual snow; yesterday I saw snow fifteen or twenty feet deep by the road. I have to drive the team and take care of it alone. Paul Cross has just had an attack of the billious fever, but he is now getting better. Ruel C. Baker, and W. Monroe are well.

Yesterday the thermometer was below the freezing point, and I had to wade the Sweetwater River twelve times. You cannot imagine what a time I have of it. My health is good. It never was better. You would hardly know me were you to see me now. I have had no opportunity to touch a razor to my face in two months—I have slept in the open air so constantly, that I am completely browned and tanned. Keep up good courage, all will yet be right.

For the last thousand miles, I have walked every step of the distance, and driven five yoke of oxen. At present we are in company with a Mr. Norton of Adrian, Michigan, Hiram C. Hodge, who left Jackson nearly a month before we did, is only three days ahead of us. The Marshall company is only one day ahead of us. We have averaged eighteen miles a day, since we left Council Bluffs.

To day we have to drive twenty-eight miles without feed or water for our cattle. Tomorrow we shall have to drive seventeen miles in the same manner. Since leaving Fort Laramie, we have driven our team eighty-one miles without feed at one time. The folks in Michigan might think this impossible, but still it can be done. Day after to-morrow we shall have to cross a sandy desert of fifty three miles, entirely destitute of water or grass for our cattle.

I presume that I have seen more than two thousand head of dead cattle by the road from Fort Laramie to this place. Not one half of the persons who have left the States, will succeed in getting their teams through to California. At present we cannot tell whether we shall go by Salt Lake or Fort Hall. At any rate we shall not be in California before the middle of October. Then I will write to you. Give my best regards to my relatives and friends, tell them I am well and doing well.—I can write no more at present as the mail is ready to start.

In haste.

R. L. Myrick.



Notes on the Isthmus.

February 20, 1850

Panama, January 2, 1850

Friend Dorrance:

On the last day of December, I arrived at Panama, the principal sea-port town of New Grenada. New Year's day was celebrated here with all the pomp and ceremony of the Catholic Church. Services were performed all day and evening at

the cathedral, while priests and gowned officials, were parading the streets of the city. The Americans got up dinners at the different hotels and restaurants.

From Michigan to New Orleans, I had a pleasant and delightful trip. The fare on the steamboat *Gen. Scott*, from Cincinnati to New Orleans was only \$10, and the table better than at any hotel in Detroit. The planters on the banks of the Mississippi were busily engaged in securing their cotton and sugar crops. I was just in time to take passage on the ship *Falcon* from New Orleans to Chagres. The ship left on Saturday the 15th of December, amidst the huzzas of hundreds on the wharf, and made the trip in ten and a half days. There was a heavy storm on the Gulf, and another on the Caribbean Sea. The ship stopped one day at Havana, and took on board the passengers of the *Ohio*, from New York, who were bound for the same destination. There were 200 steerage and 100 cabin passengers. There were berths for only 45 steerage passengers, and no seats on the deck for the remainder. We all had to stow ourselves about on deck as best we could during the day, and at night we had our choice to sleep below in the dining saloon on the floor on our blankets, or else on the deck in the same manner. I preferred the deck where I could get fresh air to breathe, rather than be shut up in a close cabin where men were as thick as cattle on a Mississippi flat boat. Our food was of the most indifferent quality—poor sea bread and refuse meat, and miserable potatoes. The coffee was not an apology for the same. The water for us to drink was taken out of the Mississippi, below New Orleans and kept in a cask on deck, in the broiling sun of a tropical climate, and the passengers were jawed if they made a free use of even that. It is an eternal shame that an American vessel should use American men in such a dastardly manner. The receipts of cabin and steerage passengers must have been some \$16,000. The expense of running the ship was about \$4,000. So that there must have been a net gain of \$10,000, or more. The *Falcon*, *Isthmus*, *Isabel*, and *Sarah Sands*

are to be sent round Cape Horn to run between Panama and San Francisco. I paid \$45 for a steerage passage from New Orleans to Chagres. The gamblers, black-legs, and loose women, besides broad-cloth gentlemen, were in the cabin. I passed one day on shore at Havana, and right well did I enjoy it. That day paid me, for I rambled all over the city until late in the evening.

The Falcon anchored off the river Chagres in a heavy sea, and the passengers were put on shore by large boats rowed by the natives. An old Spanish fort crowns the bluff, at the entrance of the river Chagres, but it is now in a state of decay and unoccupied. On the beach of the little cove or harbor there are some 100 or 200 native huts built of bamboo, having an air of comfort in this hot climate. The natives appear to be cleanly in their personal appearance, and the women are all well dressed. The children were running from hut to hut entirely naked. In the course of two hours, a party of ten of us bargained for a fine canoe to take us up the river to Cruces, at \$8 each, a distance of 30 miles by the map, and 60 by the say of the people at the village of Chagres. As soon as we had paid our passage and taken our receipt, the native owners of the boat hired three young men for rowers, and in another hour we were out of the crowd who were obtaining canoes. The common price of passage appears to be \$10. It was amusing to see the natives take a start. They came to the canoe, which is made of one tree, they being clothed in one white shirt and one blue one, a catholic cross upon their neck, and a palm leaf hat on their head, each having a bag of boiled rice and cocoa and a calabash to hold water.

The first night we went up to the village of Gaboon, a pretty place 100 huts and five miles from Chagres. Nearly all the Falcon's passengers came up to the village by 12 o'clock at night. Some slept in the native huts, and others on board of the canoes. Coffee was for sale at 5 cents a cup; oranges at 3 for 5 cents; rice, 5 cents per tea cup full; and bananas and

cocoa-nuts cheap. Fortunately Mr. Rockwell and myself bought our provisions to last across the Isthmus at New Orleans, otherwise we should have exposed ourselves to fever by eating tropical fruits. Not half of the Falcon passengers had taken forethought and consequently they had to get along as well as they could. Our party was three nights on the river. The days were intensely hot, like August weather at home; but the nights were cool and pleasant, with a heavy dew. One day we had constant rain, but we kept dry under the covering of our canoes. The third night we staid at Gorgona, where we found a pleasant village of native huts, several groceries and taverns kept by Americans and hundreds of California adventurers. The natives got up a regular Spanish fandango, or dance, and the boys stepped around some. There was such a rush for mules at Gorgona, that the next morning our party went on up to Cruces, six miles above, where we arrived at about noon. The Chagres river is now so low and shallow, that our boatmen used poles to urge the boat along for two thirds of the way from Chagres to Cruces. When at work, all the native boatmen go entirely naked except a cloth around their middle. They work faithfully from day light till dark, without flinching or complaining. The small steamer that was sent out from the States, to carry passengers from Chagres to Cruces, is high and dry on the banks of the river below Gorgona, some ten or twelve feet above the present height of the water. I noticed that workmen were digging away the bank to slide it off into the river again.

On the 30th of December I left Cruces for Panama over the mountain road. I paid \$3 to have my India-rubber bag carried on a mule; and in company with some 30 others walked the distance, 21 miles, after the mules. It took the train one day and a half to make the trip. The novelty of the walk was enough to satisfy the most romantic. The road is nothing but a mule-path cut through the mountains, sometimes winding up to a great height; then descending into dark and gloomy ravines. When first built by the old Spaniards, it must have been well

paved where it is not cut thro' the solid rock, but now it is in a state of decay; in many places, the bottom having fallen out, leaving passengers to wallow up to their knees in mud. My high boots were just right to go through the mud, and wade the mountain streams. I counted some 200 Californians returning with their piles of gold dust. Mr. Rockwell was accosted by a man whom he knew formerly at Cleveland, Ohio, who said he had made a fortune, gave us a few words of encouragement, and hurried on to keep an eye on his bags of dust. All who have been industrious and temperate have made something. In all this number, there were only five or six who were returning homesick and discouraged. I heard from the Jackson company, that they had all reached the mines, overland. I conversed with one man who saw them before he left. To-day, a man just from California, with \$10,000 was buried here, he having died with the typhoid fever. Mr. Rockwell and myself have taken passage in the ship Kingston, for San Francisco, to sail on the 10th. The price of passage is \$160. When the steamships come round the Cape, passage must be cheaper. There is no hurry to reach the mines before the 1st of April. It costs us about 75 cts. a day for board.

Your friend,
Thomas S. Myrick.



March 20, 1850 San Francisco Sunday, Dec. 30th, 1849.

Brother Thomas: Well here I am at last, in this city of a day, and you can imagine how I felt on going to the Post Office and getting five letters—also a couple of news papers. They conveyed to me the first news I had received from Jackson since I left. I see also that many of our Jackson folks have got the gold fever, you among the rest. It will do for some to come here. If a man has no home in the States, and nothing to lose,—one that cares not for human misery,—can pass quietly by the poor starving man,—the sick or the dead man, and not lend a

hand or a moment's time, to help another—can sleep out in the open air, rain or shine and live on beef and flour and not get sick; for the moment you are sick you are done; for a man here will scarcely speak to you [for] less than a dollar, and a physician will not visit you [for] less than two or three ounces. Such is the man to come to California. He can get money. If any of you think seriously of coming, let them come by the Isthmus by all means, if they can raise money. If not, come across the plains, and do not act as foolish as the majority who came across this season. Take nothing but what is wanted on the way. The best way across the plains, is to let four or six take one of Beebe's light wagons, put on a good cover, as low as possible, with six good Canadian horses, so that you can have two out of the team every day to ride. Two suits of clothes for each, rations for sixty days, a rifle and two pounds of powder per man, just cooking utensils enough and no more. Have everything as light as possible. No tools are needed; a tent is well enough, but still this is not needed. If a man cannot sleep on the ground, rain or shine, California is no place for him. If more provisions are wanted they can be had at the Great Salt Lake. Thousands of dollars worth of useless lumber, viz: tools of every description, tents, wagons, clothing, gold-washers, and in fact every thing, lines the road from Fort Laramie to the Sierra Nevada. Above all, start early—as soon as the 15th or 20th of April. St. Joseph (on the Missouri river.) is as good a point as any to start from. Take corn for your animals for two or three weeks, till the grass is up. You cannot cross the rivers on the north side of the Platte early in the season. Make the Salt Lake as soon as possible; from there go round the head of the Lake, striking the Humboldt at its head waters—follow this river to the Sink. At the sink you take the left hand road, by Carson river, leaving the old Truckie route to the right. This is the best, and in fact the only true route across the plains. Turn not to the right or left for what any man may tell you. At Laramie, take the route up the river, not over the Black Hills.

If I had time and room, in a single letter, I could give a correct guide of the whole route, telling every watering place, and where feed can be found; but one can be had of the Mormons on the Missouri river, from there to the Salt Lake, published by Clayton. At the Lake, one can be had for the remainder of the journey. I wrote you a letter from the Lake, stating that Baker and I had dissolved partnership with Monroe and Cross,—Cross staying at the Lake, and Bill getting a horse and packing thro'. By this course he was lucky enough to save his bacon. Baker and I kept the cattle. We were fooled onto the northern or Lawson route, by a company going to Fort Hall. By this means we lost everything, and came mighty near losing ourselves. Instead of its being nearer, and having less desert to cross, as represented, we found it some 300 miles further, and had a desert of 200 miles to cross before reaching the Sierra Nevada. The crossing is in sight of Goose lake, near the head of Pitt river; and instead of being over the mountains when you cross the main ridge, you have a succession of mountains for 390 miles, part of the way over volcanic ridges, destitute of every thing like vegetation. It was the 12th of October when we crossed the ridge and camped in a valley, 6 miles from the foot of the mountain. Here, on the 13th, we met an express from Sacramento city, sent out by the Governor to hurry in the emmigrants, and help along the women and children. They advised us to leave our teams and foot it through. Those that were able, did so, and on the morning of the 14th we set out, with our packs on our backs, carrying all the provisions we could have till we got to Davis' Rancho, 395 miles, by blanket and rifle. My pack weighed 40 pounds. We made this in just two weeks, and was at Lawson's on the 1st of November. Baker staid back with the team, (as he could not stand it to foot it, and lay out in the rain and snow,) with the Wolverine Rangers, from Marshall, hoping that they might possibly get the team through. But in this they were mistaken. The last I could hear of them was on Deer Creek one hundred miles back in the

mountains, with two feet of snow, and more coming at that, cattle all dead. They had plenty of company—there being about seventy families along with them. Wasn't that a beautiful sight, to see women and children waddling along in the snow by day, and laying down on a snowy pillow by night—and all for the accursed gold. Whether Baker is through or not I cannot learn, but I presume he is. If not he will have plenty of company, as we passed men sitting by the road side, who could not travel a single foot, "crying for water to cool their thirst." But we like the good 'Pharisee', had to pass by on the other side. Self preservation, you know, is the first law of nature. You can well suppose, from the amount of money that I started with, that when I arrived in this city I could not of had much money. I had just enough to buy two meals, and what I had on my back. All my clothing, Masonic Diploma, &c. . are back in the mountains. In this state of things I was ill prepared to go to the mines during the rainy season. When it is over, I shall make *von grand rush* for the gold. There is plenty of it here; and I am bound to have it. As I said before, no person ought to come to California, without he has money to speculate on, unless he is sound in limb, as can endure any and everything. Poor house, poor fare, around here. I shall go either to the Yuba or Feather river mines. Some make fortunes on the American Fork sooner, but it is a sure thing on the other rivers.

I would send home some specimens, but I have no safe way of sending them. There are thousands leaving here for the States, as soon as they can get money enough to pay their passage home. I never was in a place where so many die suddenly as here. Life like our fortunes has no safe guarantee. And then the way they take a poor fellow when he does happen to die, and put him in a rough box, clothes and all, and chuck him in a hole two feet deep, is kinder curious, not to say brutish. Newel of N. Y. is hired by the city authorities to attend to this profession, and he is making quite a good "spec" at it. The extras, such as what clothes a fellow may happen to have on,

boots, and then the "change" in a fellow's pockets, pay well. People are not so conscientious in this country as in the States. I have seen men, who were good pious ministers at home, in gambling houses, betting at Monte Banks. This San Francisco is a great town. There are about fifty thousand persons who nightly throng these houses. The only things that are scarce here, are good beds, good living, good health, and women. But this California is a great country, because the American Eagle has flied over it.

George Gardner has just the right turn for this place, and with what capital he has he could make an independent fortune in two years. Hodge, when I last saw him was well. The Fords are here, speculating. Orrin McCrackin is also here.

Write often, and let me know how things move along in Jackson. Give my love to all.

Your Brother,
R. L. Myrick.



May 15, 1850

The Route to California—The Isthmus-Tehuantepec Route—

Dear Dorrance:—Having left Panama January 12th, I sailed on the ship Kingston for California 53 days from harbor to harbor. I was two weeks at Panama. There were two American ships and one British, that sailed for that port during this time, besides the steamer Unicorn, all loaded with passengers. The Kingston did not leave 50 Americans on the Isthmus, who had money enough to pay \$160, the price of passage, although there were some who gambled their funds away at cards, and were unable to go on. It was perfectly astonishing to me to see men run the risk of getting strapped, who had started from home with only \$300 or \$400 or \$500; but such is poor human nature. The Isthmus is a sort of half-way-home for men to lose their money. Raw hands are foolish to think they can compete with old gamblers. They are like the silly fish that bites at the gilded

bait. Those who cross the Isthmus, will do well to stop eating meat and Northern viands, as soon as they leave the States, and live on a very plain vegetable diet, or else, perhaps, get the Panama fever, which may be the causes of closing their career on the Pacific.

There were 156 passengers on the Kingston, and not a death on board while she was making the passage. She is an old Nantucket whaler, and was well provisioned for a long sea voyage, as far as quantity was concerned. From Panama she ran down to the Equator, and continued on that tack till she had made 105 degrees of west longitude, when she took her course north by north west for this port. For one month, the weather was as hot as in harvest time at the north. We slept on deck, or any where we could keep cool from the burning of the torrid zone. The monotony of sea life is dull enough. To eat, drink, and sleep, are almost the only exciting things on board of a ship in the torrid zone. At different times, several large sperm, right, and fin back whales were seen near the ship. Several skip jacks and porpoises were caught and hauled on board. A booby was caught, (a sea bird which follows the ship for weeks, and occasionally lights on the rigging) and a message was tied on its neck and the thing was sent adrift. After a week or two, the booby bird came back to us.

It was highly amusing to me to see the eating process go on. At the appointed hour, from the cooking galley, there was served out to each mess of 13 men, a bucket or kit of beef or pork, boiled, another of boiled rice, or flour pudding, or sweet potatoes, or beans, and another of tea or coffee, with sugar or molasses. These rations were placed on deck in the center of a groupe of a mess of 13 men, when each one had a chance with his knife and fork, tin cup and tin plate. Hunger is a sauce which makes the plainest kind of food a luxury. Yet the Kingston's passengers fared better than those of any other ship that sailed from Panama, even better than those of the steamer Unicorn; but at home or on land, all her provisions except pork,

would not have been eatable. The Captain acted the part of a gentleman, because he found it for his interest to do so, and used his passengers better than is usual on the Pacific side of the voyage, where men, too often, are treated like brutes. One of the ships that sailed at the same time, was without anything on board to eat for the last three days of her passage. Her Captain is now in the city prison,—an old hulk in the harbor, as I am informed. The hardships on board ended the days of three of her passengers before she came into port. Those persons who expect good things to eat on board a ship or steamer had better stay at home. How many fellows I have heard express a wish that they had never left their comfortable homes for California.

While the Kingston was in north latitude 30 d., and west longitude 130 deg., there came on a severe norther, which lasted 18 days. The vessel lay to under storm sails, without advancing, nearly three weeks. The captain said he had never seen rougher weather off Cape Horn. The author of "Two Years Before the Mast," (Dana,) gives a truthful and life-like description of what often occurs off the Gulf of California. Hereafter the passage will be made much quicker than now. The Aspinwall and Howard lines of steamers, which are to sail from Panama and Tehuantepec, will shorten the passage, and give a fair competition, which will be of decided advantage to passengers. Now, steamers and sail ships have it all their own way, and men are too often treated like cattle. The captain of the Kingston made \$148 on each ticket; which gave him over \$22,000 profit on the trip, which is four times more than the old ship and her cargo was worth, she being 32 years old. She is now at anchor in this harbor, whence she will probably never leave; the captain and all hands are going to the mines, being tired of whaling, or blubber hunting, as the sailors term it. As soon as a sail vessel comes into the harbor, the sailors and officers leave it, like rats from a sinking craft. An ounce a day gives Jack better compensation than 110 a month, or a share of whale oil, on a three years voyage in the Pacific.

On Wednesday, March 6th, we came in sight of the California coasts. In the distance, the mountains of the coast appeared to be covered with snow which proved to be only fog. As the vessel bore down with every sail filled, with the last puffs and breathings of the surly and roaring old northwester, which had been trying to head us for the last three weeks, no sight could appear more splendid and romantic than the roadstead before the harbor of San Francisco. One large rock on the left, and two on the right, all rising precipitously from the sea, several hundred feet, like volcanic formations, stood as massive pillars of the Golden Gate. Just at dusk, as the sun had thrown his last rays for the day on the mountain peaks before us, we hove in sight of the harbor of San Francisco. No pilot coming off for us, our captain passed orders for the ship to stand off and on till morning. As she filed and stood away from shore how anxiously 156 men watched the last glimpse of land for the night. It was passed midnight ere all had turned into their berths between decks; and as soon as the first day streak appeared in the east, we were all on deck again. This was Thursday, March 7th. As the ship ran down again to the entrance of the harbor, I counted hundreds and hundreds of whales spouting and lashing the sea with their broad flukes. Ducks or dippers, cape pigeons, and sea-fowl of every variety, were sporting about the ship. At about 10 o'clock, A. M., a pilot came off for us (Robert Wagstaff. Esq., of Lake Erie memory,) who took us safely in to the harbor and delivered the ship into the hands of an officer of the U. S. Custom House. The pilot received \$3 per foot for his services; making \$112 for piloting the ship 6 or 8 miles. This is the first touch of California prices. I did not get on shore till Saturday, 9th instant. Each passenger paid \$1.20 for an examination of his baggage and a custom house clearance, the Kingston being from Panama, a foreign port.

I took lodgings in a house, built of very light frame work, and covered with good tent cloth. It is about fifty by thirty feet

and one story high. During the winter it has been rented for \$600 per month, the man who hired it keeping a boarding house at \$21 per week for each boarder. He had 40 cash boarders, and broke down at that price and last week he went up to the mines. There are some 20 or 30 lodgers now, who board themselves. The price now is 50 cents per day and night. We sleep on standee cots or berths, and have two light blankets each. This is the best lodging that I have had since I left New Orleans. I am now laying up sleep for store, preparatory to going to the mines. What a luxury there is in a night's sleep on a canvas cot! For the last three months I have slept on the soft side of a rough board, or else on a brick floor, or on the ground. Aha! Aha! I know some lazy fellows in Jackson that I would have given several ounces to have had with me. A feather bed to sleep on! Pshaw! I have not seen the thing since I left Jackson. I have done as all Californians must do—roll my self up in a Mackinac woolen blanket, with the addition of an India-rubber blanket, when the nights are damp and cold. These articles packed in an India-rubber bag, only swell the bulk of the baggage a little, which is an item of the greatest importance.

It is now Saturday evening, March 16th. I have been here one week, and have seen the town by day and by evening. I have found many old acquaintances here from Michigan and New York; among whom are Messrs. J. Ford, L. J. Fish, M. Oppenheimer, Morgan S. Bates, and others. Messrs. E. S. Lathrop, S. Eastman, C. E. Church, E. S. Rockwell, B. F. Clafflin, Wm. Ford, Wm. Monroe, R. C. Baker, and J. Kane are scattered or scattering through the mining region somewhere, in good health when last heard from by those resident here. What has given me the greatest pleasure and increased hope, is that I have found my brother. (R. L. Myrick.) in good health and making money.

And now, for San Francisco I have a few words. There is now a population of about 20,000 persons. Some 10,000 persons have just gone to the mines, who wintered here. There is a

perfect stagnation of all business except gambling and auction sales. The city has grown up in the short space of one year. All kinds of houses have been erected at enormous prices. They are of brick, wood, iron, zinc, galvanized iron, reed or bamboo, and tent cloth. There are also a great many tents pitched in the city bounds. Lots have been sold at great prices, and rents have been enormously ruinous. Except the government buildings and some few storehouses, almost every house or tent has been used either for gambling or boarding house during the last winter. Board has ranged from \$2 to \$8 per day. But now, as I walk on any of the streets of the city, even on the public square, I see signs on nearly half the buildings with this inscription, "To Rent," or this, "For Sale." There are no sales of lots or buildings, except at auction, at no great falling off in prices. Vessel after vessel arrives with ready framed houses or lumber, but those articles no longer command enormous prices. Mechanics still get \$10 per day, and day laborers \$4 per day, if they can get work at all, which is quite difficult. Indeed most of the work done now, is grading the streets with pick, shovel and wheel-barrow. Carpenters can clear about \$50 per week, and day laborers \$20 per week, if they board themselves; their provisions costing about \$10 a week. Indeed at these prices, workmen are dissatisfied, and are hurrying off to the mines as fast as possible.

Gambling is carried on here in the greatest perfection, from early morning till midnight, during every day of the week, from Monday morning till Sunday night, inclusive. The gambling houses are all over the city. A description of one will suffice for all. One called the "El Dorado," on the Plaza, is the richest. It is a large one story building on a corner of two of the most thronged streets. On one side of it is a long bar filled with the choicest liquors, at 25 cents per glass. On another side is a bar for serving up bits of rich refreshments, at the same price per small cup or plate. Over this bar is a raised orchestra seat, where five or six musicians play all the while for the

crowd. All around the walls of the rooms are the most splendid and luxurious pictures of women that can be imagined, all as large as life, and twice as lovely and fascinating. Then, arranged on the floor of the room, in regular order and at proper distance, are the gambling tables, on which are piled thousands of dollars in silver, gold, golden ounces, gold from the mines, from the size of a pea to that of a goose egg, or a piece of chalk. The principal game is *monte*; but more than a dozen different tables have different games. During the day, the house is well filled with visitors; but during the evening, and far into the night, it is perfectly jammed with a crowd of all nations and all tongues and all people. The enchanting and harmonious music, the brilliant and dazzling light from richly made chandeliers, the chinck of the gold, forever constant, the exhilarating effects of the best of liquors, and the constant winnings and losings of such a crowd of players, are enough to turn the brains of those who would never have thought of gambling when at home in the States. The "El Dorado" is nearly the same as a dozen other large establishments, and the pattern of hundreds of smaller ones all over the city. Indeed although every other house is a hotel, still every hotel has gambling tables enough in its bar room to nearly or quite pay their rent for the rest of the establishment. Every bar room, too, has its music from the grinding of a common hand organ to the dulcet tones of the best violin player from the States, who receives \$400 or more per month for his services. Enough for gambling. I will only add that I saw a fellow one evening win over \$6000 in ounces, and another fellow lose as much or more. The poor fool threw away his money at the rate of 40 ounces at a bet, at monte, with perfect recklessness. The gambler was very polite and obsequious to those who had just come in from the mines; and they can tell them as easily as a merchant of Jackson can designate an honest farmer from the back woods of Ingham.

Provisions are good enough here for the most particular epicures. California fresh beef, the best in the world, sells for

only 15 to 18 cents per lb.; Chili flour at from \$10 to \$12 per sack of 200 pounds, and just as good as Michigan flour; salt pork is scarce at \$32 per barrel; butter at \$1 per pound; and dried fruits, teas, coffee, &c. cheap by wholesale as at home, but mostly higher by retail on account of high rents. But the wild game of California beats the world. Bear, elk, deer, a dozen varieties of duck, several kinds of wild geese, prairie game, salmon, turtle, monstrous pickerel, and others that I do not know, I see for sale every morning in the market. This very day I ate a venison dinner and tasted half a dozen other dishes, that made me perfectly contented with California, so far as the inner man was concerned. Such meals cost only \$1 each at more than a hundred restaurants or eating houses in the city. Call for one or a dozen dishes and the price is one dollar. And then one can have his eating served up according to the cooking of the Chinese, Hindoos, French, Dutch, Chiliane, English, Americans, and every other nation under heaven. If a man has money, he can live here sure. If he has no money, he can hardly find any kind of work for his daily bread.

Last night Capt. Vail and party from Milwaukie, Wisconsin, lodged with me. The Captain left Council Bluffs, June 7th, 1849, at the same time that my brother's party crossed the Missouri. When the Captain arrived at the Mormon city, in September, instead of taking the northern route by Humboldt river, he headed a train of 700 wagons for the southern route, by the old Spanish trail, or Fremont's route of 1844. For the first 100 miles every thing went on well, but when the train reached the ridge of mountains that divide the Great Basin from Mexico, the whole party divided to suit themselves, and have been all winter straggling into California. Capt. Vail and party reached Los Angeles in January, without tents or wagons, having fed on their oxen, when they became too weak and poor to draw their luggage. When the Captain came into our lodging from Los Angeles, he had one suit of clothes and two shirts, with two Mackinac blankets, the balance of his outfit

from the States. I sat up nearly all night, hearing the Captain's story of the suffering of men, women and children on the route. They saw the Elephant.

As a sample of what has been done here the winter just passed, I will give one item. A man engaged to furnish a lot of cord wood at \$26 per cord. He hired a company of choppers, took them over the Bay east of the city some 15 miles. He paid them \$4 per day each and boarded them. It cost him \$10 per cord to hire his wood boated across the Bay. He cleared some \$10 to \$12 per cord. He then burnt wood into charcoal. He is now selling his charcoal in sacks of two bushel each, for \$3 per sack. He pays day laborers \$5 per day to carry the sacks from the landing into the warehouse, a distance of two or three rods. A small mule load of wood sells now for \$2 or \$4. A man can carry it all at two arms full. I will give another item. A day or two ago I was walking on one of the wharves. A man was unloading bundles of hay from a small schooner. I asked him the price of his hay. He replied, 8 cts. per pound. On my expressing surprise, he replied that it was now fairly ruinous, as all winter he had sold it at 25 cents per pound that is at \$500 a ton. The hay was just like Michigan marsh hay and it is cut by any one who chooses on the marshes of the San Joaquin and other water courses.

Communication between San Francisco and the interior towns is perfect. Good steamboats run every day to Sacramento city, Yubaville, and Maysville, as far up as Yuba River; also up the San Joaquin up to Stockton and San Joaquin city, as far as the Jule marsh; also up and down the bay of San Francisco, from Bernicia to San Jose. The price of passage is from \$25 to \$45 and enough more for extra baggage. Small schooners also leave the city wharves every day loaded with provisions and supplies of all kinds for the different mines. The price of passage on them is from \$10 to \$20, and sleep on deck. The steamers go in one day, and the sail vessels as wind and tide favors them.

The harbor of San Francisco will hold more shipping than

Boston, New York or New Orleans. Nature has done enough here. After the present reaction of business here, it will assume a healthy and regular upward tendency. The rainy season is about closing. We are all for the mines to try our fortune among the thousands who are going to them.

Yours,

Thomas S. Myrick



June 19, 1850.

San Jose, April 23, 1850

Friend Dorrance: The last letter which I sent to you, was mailed at San Francisco, from which city I came here, where I have been between four and five weeks. The price of passage was \$30 for 50 miles of travel—42 miles by steamboat and 8 miles by stage coach which was drawn by 5 mules. Although the fare was rather high, still \$2 extra was charged for a very indifferent meal on board of the steamboat, which is a small iron propeller, with accommodations for only about 50 passengers. All the way up the Bay I had a good view of both shores. They appeared to be covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, and only here and there a few stunted trees. They are bold and abrupt. From the southern extremity of the Bay, the boat entered the river de Guadalupe de San Jose, and proceeded up it a few miles to the landing place, where there is the hull of an old vessel for a warehouse. There are also several small houses for hotels. From the landing to the city the road is nearly level and very good.

San Jose is the capitol of the State. It is situated in a beautiful valley 80 miles long and 20 miles wide. The city contains 5,000 inhabitants, composed of Americans, Spaniards, Chilians and Indians. The plat of the city is regular; the streets crossing each other at right angles. The houses are built of burnt and unburnt brick, wood, and tent cloth. There are quite a number of well built houses, as good as any in Jackson. There are four hotels kept by Americans. The City Hall and the Catholic

church are spacious buildings, and made of unburnt brick or adobes. New buildings are constantly being erected by Americans, who have chosen this place for their permanent residence. The Guadalupe de San Jose and the Cayota, two small rivers, course their way through the valley on each side of the city, and empty into San Francisco Bay. Where it is not cultivated, the whole valley is covered with a most luxuriant growth of grass and clover, which affords abundant pasturage to large numbers of cattle, mules, and horses. Along the banks of the river, there are several varieties of oak, and also willow. Three miles west of San Jose city is the mission of Santa Clara, which was founded by the Catholics on the 12th day of January, 1777. The country has been named Santa Clara after the mission.

The valley of San Jose is well adapted to agriculture. Wheat, oats, millet, potatoes, garden vegetables, apples, pears, plums, peaches, apricots and grapes are cultivated with very little labor. Before the rush of American emigration, apples sold for only 5 for a dime; but last year they were worth 50 cents each. American farmers are settling in the valley this year very fast. They take up the mission lands; claiming each 160 acres under pre-emption right. Land near the city, held under Mexican title, and respected by the treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo, is worth from \$20 to \$100 dollars per acre. The soil is mostly clay or sandy loam. Water is abundant, the two rivers affording a plentiful supply. By digging 20 feet, good well water is readily obtained; and by good I mean soft and pure water. The climate is mild and pleasant. There is never snow sufficient to whiten the ground. There are two seasons, the wet and the dry. The former generally commences in November and continues till July. Agriculture is carried on during the wet season. At this present time grass and clover are a foot high. Apples, pears and peaches are as large as a piece of chalk.

About 15 miles south west of San Jose are the celebrated quicksilver mines of California. They are on a farm of only 18,000 acres, owned by a Mr. Cook, who is worth some \$300,000

besides the mines and who lives in this city. Last year the owner sold the privilege of working the mines to two Americans for some \$90,000, he retaining a certain per centage. They failed to make the first payment. In the mean time, the British consul at the city of Mexico, through his agent, a Mr. Forbes, who is here, has just put into operation machinery at an expense of \$300,000. He employs some 50 miners. He has followed the vein some hundred feet or more into the side of the mountain. It is about 8 feet in thickness. The ore is of a reddish color, mixed with quartz. The agent says that he will be able with his machinery to melt ore enough to produce one ton of quick-silver every day, which is worth from \$1 to \$2 per pound. Heretofore the mines have been worth about the sum of \$25,000 per week. Hereafter they will rival the gold mines in value. No computation can be made of the extent of their richness. The owner may perhaps become the richest man in the Union if not the world.

Capitalists have commenced furnishing building materials in right good earnest. Three men, with a capital of over \$1,000,000, have engaged in making brick. They employ a large number of laborers; giving \$10 per day and board to mechanics, and \$5 per day to common laborers without board. It costs them \$40 per 1000 to make their brick, which are of superior quality. During the year bricks have been selling in this city at \$100 per M. The mechanics are mostly Americans, and the common laborers are native Californians. The head mechanic is a Methodist minister, the Rev. W. Wilson, who makes his \$10 per day through the week, and preaches at the mission of Santa Clara on Sunday. By permission, I use Mr. Wilson's name. His example of labor is what every one may expect who comes to California. Silk stocking gentry will do well to stay in the States east of the Rocky Mountains. Here on the Pacific, a man can make money, who is not afraid to soil his hands. During the winter, Mr. Wilson has painted houses, laid up brick, and turned his hand to whatever would give him from \$10 to \$16

per day. In addition to the brick business, lumbering is also becoming important. On the Santa Cruz mountains, west of this valley, there is an abundance of red wood, a species of oak. Several saw mills have been erected on small streams running from the mountains into the Guadalupe. Sawed lumber is becoming cheaper than it has been. Red wood is used for shingles, clapboards, floors, and indeed all parts of a house. Squads of men are free to get out lumber on their own account. A good chopper can earn from \$10 to \$16 per day.

On the first Monday of this month county elections were held throughout the State for the first time. That Monday was a proud day in San Jose. On the Saturday evening previous, the American young men had a grand torch light procession on foot and on horseback, which completely took the natives by surprise. Banners, torches, bonfires, rockets and fireballs were the order of the night. On Monday the election passed off in accordance with law and order. There was no fighting or rowdyism during the day. I had the privilege of casting my first ballot in this State; and I assure you that I felt proud of my American citizenship. There were two regular tickets, Whig and Democrat, and a half dozen independent ones. The result showed about an equal division of the offices between the Whigs and Democrats. During the day a great horse race came off between two racers owned by an American and a Spaniard. The purse was \$10,000. At the hour thousands of persons were on the ground. Gold circulated freely. I saw a few American ladies present, and a great many Spanish ones. The Spanish ladies were all on fine horses, and took a lively interest in the race by betting high. Considerable national feeling was awakened. The American horse took the purse most handsomely. I saw one man wagging off the ground a handkerchief full or nearly so of ounces, besides three or four horses that he had won. Just before evening the natives on horseback had a tilt something like a tournament. On their horses they formed a semi circle on the plaza, and, at the chorus of a song two horsemen rushed

into the centre, and strove to unhorse each other. When a fellow came upon the ground, a general shout was raised. The most expert feats of horsemanship were performed. The natives are said to be born in the saddle, they are such good horsemen. Only once place a Californian in the saddle, and no fractious horse can throw him out of it again.

On the second Monday of this month, officers were elected for the first time under the city charter. The result was about equal between the Whigs and Democrats, and politics ran high. Neither party has a newspaper here; but both are making arrangements for a party paper. There are 500 voters in the city, and none but Americans, and those who voted under Mexican law, are allowed to cast a ballot. Negroes and 'greasers,' or those of mixed blood, are entirely excluded.

The Legislature adjourned last night at 12 P. M. Its session has been laborious, but harmonious entirely. The political complexion of the first Legislature of California was Democratic, with a strong Whig opposition. The Locos have had everything their own way. The first thing done was to apportion good fat salaries to their brethren. The salaries of the State officers were raised to \$10,000 each, because \$7,500 was thought to be too small a sum. The old Mexican offices of Alcade and Judges of 1st, 2d, 3d Instance have been abolished, and those of Justices of the Peace, County Judges, District Judges, and Supervisor, established in their place. The two first are elected by the people, and the two last appointed by the Legislature. A Superior Judge has \$10,000 per per year, and a District Judge \$7,500; a County Judge has from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per year. Every Judge not elected by the people is a stiff Loco of course; and so are all appointed officers this year. The Legislature was elected, without distinction of party; and the Whigs have been handsomely caught for once. How it will be next winter, we shall see. Among the general laws, one has been enacted taxing foreigners, who work in the mines, \$20 per month; and, to enforce it, the Sheriff of each county has authority to call out

a posse of Americans. This law is very popular among Americans, as it gives them the power to drive out the gathering from the four quarters of the globe by authority. There will be some music, if not bullets, as the French, English, &c. are opposed to it. Another law enacts a poll tax of \$5 on all males over 21 years of age, and 50 cents on every \$100 of taxable property. Laws have been enacted for every department of State Government. One incident will be interesting to your readers. Last week news reached here (of Feb. 15th.) from Washington, that California was not admitted into the Union; that the South were furious and the North for once stubborn; and that the Slave Question might perhaps dissolve the fair fabric of our ever glorious Union. Quite alarmed, several members of the Legislature who were from the Southern States, hastily drew up a set of resolutions, disclaiming any part or lot in the Slavery question, and giving instructions to our Senators and Representatives sent for places in Congress, to preserve an armed neutrality on the Proviso. The resolutions were printed in great haste for immediate action thereon; but, when they reached the point of action, they were promptly voted down by a large majority; as being highly impolitical at the present time; and, in their place, a certain clause of the Constitution of California, forever prohibiting Slavery, was brought up for consideration as the expression of the opinion of the members of the first Legislature of California; the design of which was to render the first nugatory, and let Congress pursue its own course in reference to the admission of the new State. One thing is certain, that this State must ever be a free one. Thanks to the nobility of labor, Negroes are not wanted here. Those slave-holders who have brought on their slaves with them, find them to be rather a transient commodity.

The news from the different mines is, that gold is still found in large quantities by some, while others barely dig enough to pay their board. The water in the rivers is very high; and, in some places, the valleys are inundated. No gold can

be dug in the wet diggins; and, even in the dry, it is a hard business.

The melting of the snow on the mountains causes the present freshet, which, it is thought cannot last long. But the rush to the mines is great. Being off the route of travel from San Francisco to the mines, I do not see the crowds that go that way; but, through this city, train after train of loaded teams and pack mules from the Southern part of the State and from Mexico are rushing to the gold regions. And still they come. Good riding and pack mules are worth here \$100 a head. Horses are from \$45 to \$150 a head. Oxen are from 100 to 200 dollars a yoke.

Articles for miners are high. Common cowhide boots are \$8 per pair, and fine boots from 8 to 16 dollars a pair. Today I bought a pair of common shoes and paid 6 dollars. Butter is from \$1 to \$1.50 per lb. Milk is \$1 per quart. Board at the Chilian eating houses is \$14 per week, and the bill of fare bountiful while at the American houses boarding and lodging are from \$21 to \$35 per week. In conclusion, I believe that those who are well situated at home, would act a wise part to stay there; but young men of good constitution, who can work hard and stand grief, can become rich here after a while. I have earned more in one month than I could at home in six months; but, then, I have not seen the whole of the elephant yet. My first day's work bro't me \$17. The most that I have earned in one day is \$26. That settles the question for me. I shall dig on. Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



September 11, 1850

Middle Yuba,

July 11, 1850.

The last letter which I wrote to you from this place, detailed an account of my arrival, and the commencement of mining operations. Since then we have progressed. Our company is made up of four men.

We have built a dam two-thirds across the river, of 60 feet, of stone and dirt; a wing dam down the middle of the river of stone, of about 100 feet, and we have been three days digging a hole 10 feet square, 8 or 10 feet deep, where we have drained. We have not touched the bed rock, where gold is generally deposited, but the company hope to do so in two or three days. The water runs into the hole so fast from springs in the bank, that one of us has to bail it out almost constantly. The dirt that we take out is sand and gravel. Occasionally a large stone must be removed. The dirt is very closely packed. We have to stand in mud and water and shovel all day, while during the middle of the day the sun's rays come down scorching hot. We have worked two rockers a half of a day and taken out about one dollar's worth of pure gold. That is all. We have got to dig to the bed-rock which is slate, and we may have to dig 15 or 20 feet. You may ask me how I like mining? Well, I have been in the mines two months, and as far as work or living are concerned, I can endure it all, provided, I can get gold enough for my pay to compensate me for sleeping on the ground, digging in the mud and water all day, and eating the plainest kind of food. How would you like it? There is the rub!

As far as my experience goes, I would advise you and every other friend I have, not to come to California to work in the mines. I have seen hard work done in Michigan in clearing land; but mining caps the climax. Canal digging is no touch to it for real hard labor. People in the States have no idea of the labor, hardships, and privations of a miner's life in California, and they are so intoxicated with the desire for gold that they cannot see or hear about the true statement of the case.

For 10 miles up and down this river, between two canons, every bar, and nearly every rod of the bed of the river, are claimed and worked. Dams and races have been built or are being built by companies all along; but nothing has as yet been taken from the bed of the river to pay for the amount of labor expended. In the course of two months, miners will begin to

make their piles. From February to July or August, the water is too high to do much of any thing. During that time the snow is melting on the Sierra Nevada mountains, and the rivers are flooded, and in some places the valleys. Then the digging time is from July or August to November, when the rainy season commences. Some digging can be done in February and March, between the rainy season and the freshet of melted snow; but the best time is during August, September and October. If I had known these facts before coming into the mining region, I should have been better off. As it is, I have lost two months of time for which I have as yet realized nothing. A man who owns a good farm at home, and comes to California to get a fortune in one year, is a great fool. About one in 20 or one in 50 may dig a pile in a short time; but there are hundreds and thousands who cannot earn an ounce a day in the mines. Claims have been sold on this river within the last two weeks, for \$50 and \$100 and \$200, just according to location. At present nobody is hiring workmen. I learn by a friend, that on the North Yuba and Main Yuba, a few who have good claims are paying laborers \$8 a day and board, or \$10 a day without board. But there are two applicants to one chance to work. The mines in this region are completely overrun with men. New schemes and humbugs are started every day. The most recent is the Gold Lake humbug, which has fooled thousands of poor fellows out of their time and money. Merchants and speculators have made all the money. But after a while, men fresh from the States will learn something about California. At home the newspaper accounts are only descriptions of the successful; while more than half that come here cannot earn any thing. I say cannot; because, here on this river, work has been done in building dams, digging races, and excavating holes down to the bed rock, that would perfectly astonish men accustomed to hard work at home; and, still, on this branch, not enough gold has yet been dug to pay the board of the men employed. Millions of gold are taken home by the steamers; but this is not

strange, for the gold region is some 300 miles in length, and 100 to 200 in width, and somebody must get some. It is all luck and chance about locating on a rich claim. It is all blind chance in finding gold after digging a hole 15 or 20 feet deep to the bed rock, which is something to be done, for the whole bed of the river is hard-head stone, piled together like stone in a wall. Although it is now July, still the nights are very cold. I sleep under two thick woolen blankets and one india rubber blanket,—have the same number under me. There was frost all through June. The sun does not come down into the ravine till late in the morning; but between 11 o'clock A. M., and 3 o'clock P. M., it is too hot for comfort. Then it is like August weather at home. Up here in the mountains it is cooler and healthier than down on the Sacramento. On this river there has been only one death; that of a man who got the Panama fever coming over the isthmus. He had every attention that miners could give him. There is real good heart and feeling among the miners. They are human. But it is a hard place for a man to get sick, and worse to die and be buried in the rude manner that necessity compels. But to close,—In one of two months, I hope to give you better news of mining. The water in the river is falling fast—Soon the long-toms, rockers, and pans, will all be busy. I am working hard for fortune; but I must wait and hope. Remember me to my friends in Jackson County. My health is perfectly good. H. C. Hodge, J. G. Thorn, and other Michigan friends are also well.

Your brother,
Thomas S. Myrick



*November 6, 1850,
The Forks of the North Fork of the Yuba,
August 18th, 1850.*

Friend D.—Another month has passed, and still I am in the mines, digging and delving for the precious ore. The first week

in May last, I came up from Marysville to the middle fork of the Yuba, and on the 14th of May commenced operations. Four men of us packed upon mules our tools, provisions, and everything necessary for mining. Our party consisted of four Northerners; and our purpose was to dam and drain the river. The water of the rivers was then too high for work, on account of the melting of the snow on the mountains; but we succeeded in building a dam of stone and dirt, 60 feet long and a wing dam 100 feet long. The dams were from 5 to 8 feet high, and some 5 or 6 feet wide. Then we prospected and found nothing that would pay for working. By prospecting the bed of the river is meant, the digging of a hole from the surface to the bed rock, which is of slate, and on or near which gold is deposited. I sold out my share in this company, and bought a share in another adjoining. This claim consisted of three hundred yards of the river's bed, divided by an island. This claim was dammed and prospected on both sides of the island faithfully. There were eight shares, and 7 men worked. The last hole that we dug was 20 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 16 feet deep. We did not find \$5 worth of gold in the crevices of the bed rock. Our fortune on this last claim settled the question of finding gold on the middle fork of the Yuba. The two merchants near us packed up their goods and left. Companies above and below us for ten miles, broke up and scattered, although some of them had built dams and dug races at great cost and labor. The price of flour fell from 50 cents to 12½ cts. per pound, and all other provisions in the same ratio. Tents and mining tools could be bought for almost nothing. Messrs. H. C. Hodge and R. L. Myrick started out to prospect. All prospect of finding gold on the middle fork of the Yuba were fatal to thousands of men.

The last week in July I packed my effects on my mule, and started for the forks of the north branch of the Yuba. The distance is only some 12 or 15 miles; but that day's travel beat any thing that I have seen or experienced in California. The

spurs of the mountains are so steep that I could only climb up by grasping bushes or shrubs. It is said that a mule can go where a man can; but for once this saying was not verified. Old Whitey, as my mule is named from her color, slipped on a ledge of out-cropping slate, and mule and pack commenced a descent of 300 or more feet. By a turn of the lariat around a projecting rock, I saved old Whitey for a little more hard work. The pack was cut loose in double quick time. There I sat down a moment to see all loose things that would roll chase each other down the side of the mountain. Old Whitey got a few bruises, but tin kettles, pans and plates had a fine spree. Most of the way, there is a dense chapparal of bushes some 4 to 8 feet high, and the trail through them is bad enough. There was snow in large drifts on the highest peaks of the mountains. It was decidedly a novelty to me to pass by or over snow some 6 or 8 feet deep, in July. I doubt whether the snow ever entirely leaves the Sierra Nevada. After reaching the top of the dividing ridges, then came the descent. The last hill is only some 4 or 5 miles down it, and the last mountain spur only about one mile; but then Jacob's ladder could hardly have been steeper, or more difficult. The mule train angles along down it in regular Mexican style. Just at dark I reached the river, bought some barley at 37½ cts. per lb. for my mule, some pilot bread at 85 cts. per lb. for myself, made a cup of tea in my tin cup, eat my supper on an old pine log for my table, and then rolled myself in my blanket by the log for the night. That is the way that we get along in California.

At the forks of the north fork of the Yuba, there is a mining city of some 2,000 people—men and boys. There are hotels, stores, groceries, bakeries, meat-markets, drug stores, blacksmith shops, and all other shops necessary in a mining town. The buildings are nearly all made of spruce poles, covered with tent cloth. The ground in the floor. They are all open in front. Dry goods and groceries are left without lock and key. Nothing is stolen, except now and then a bag of gold, which

latter commodity can only be secreted or used by a rogue without detection, while anything else stolen would only be a witness against a scoundrel. The store in which I am now stopping with a friend from Michigan, is built of poles and tent cloth. Everything for sale is left exposed at night. The store is barred simply by placing a bench or two in front to keep out mules that run loose, while we sleep on the counter without pistols or any weapons of defence. Flour is 35 cts. per pound, dried peaches \$1 per pound, onions \$2 per pound, pork 60 cts. per pound, fresh beef 25, 30 & 40 cts. per pound, tea \$2 per pd., apple pies \$1 each, peach pies \$1 each, mince pies \$2 each, liquor 25 cts. a drink, bread 50 a loaf of 1 pound, board at a hotel \$30 per week. A man can cook for and board himself for \$1 to \$2 a day. The miners generally camp near their claims and board themselves. California will furnish more male cooks than any other State in the Union. Two days ago I saw two watermelons sold, one for \$5 and the other \$8. They were brought up from San Jose. Potatoes sell for 50 cts. per pound, which is about \$30 per bushel.

And now about the yellow ore, I must say a little, eating and all the appliances of living having been described. There is gold here and no mistake. It is here. It is here in ounces, in pounds, in bags and in boxes. I have seen it dug out by the pan full. Last week a man dug out one piece on a river claim worth \$1,120. This I know. The largest pan full of gold that has been dug out of a crevice in a bank was worth \$1,600. Three men took out of one hole 40 feet square and 25 feet deep, a little over 200 pounds of gold, or over \$38,400. They have gone home to the States. Every man who has a river claim, or even a bank claim of 30 feet square near the forks of the north fork of the Yuba, has a mint of a fortune. No man can hold more than 30 feet square. Claims are bought and sold from \$100 to \$500 each. Claims are located here by men who came up the river in March or April, when the mountains were covered with snow 10 and 15 feet deep. No claims can be had now except by

purchase. There are hundreds of men who are tramping up and down the river seeking claims and finding none. A few miles above this place little or no gold can be found. The gold is not found in regular deposits in the rivers or their banks. Wherever it has been deposited by means of volcanic action, there it is found in masses. On the middle forks of the Yuba there is no gold above the ten mile canon. On the south side of the Yuba a few claims and bars pay well. On Slate Creek, a branch of the Yuba, there is a failure. On the main Yuba and its north fork so far up as this place there is gold enough. Some branches of Feather river pay well, and on others nothing can be found. The large newspaper stories of rich diggings here and there cannot always be credited. Read a great many articles from California with grains of allowance. There are thousands of men who located on claims which to all appearance were as good as any here, but which have proved an entire failure. Old miners and Oregon men were disappointed on the middle fork of the Yuba. But here there is no mistake about it. I have been here over two weeks. I have got an interest in a claim. It pays well by thousands above and below it. Yesterday I earned \$25. That will do for one day's work. Ordinary work, that is, work in the mines commands generally \$8 per day and board, or \$10 per day and board one's self. There are scores of persons here, who have been unlucky elsewhere in the mines ready to do any kind of labor for \$8 to \$10 per day. There are a few foreigners who work for \$150 to \$200 per month and board; but such men are not respected here. Wood is \$20 dollars per cord. A man gets his board at the Yuba House (\$30 per week,) and \$16 per cord of wood, pine or oak, corded by the Hotel. The wood cutter chops on the mountain and draws the wood down by a rope fastened around a jag or load. I was offered \$1200 for building a log house 40 by 20 feet, but refused it, because boards sawed by hand are worth \$1 per foot, and sell for that, so that two floors cost \$1200, and a log house is worth \$2,000, the logs, boards, rafters, and shingles being made

of green pine. Those who stay here next winter will want warm log houses to live in; for if the nights here now are a specimen of the cold of winter, cloth houses will be of little account. A house of one story, made of a light frame, covered with rived clapboards, sold here lately for \$4,000. I have visited all the claims up and down the river for two miles. On one river claim drained and worked by 8 men, gold has been taken out as follows, in a race that is being dug, one day 3 pounds, the next day 7 lbs., the third day 13¾ pounds, and to-day over 16 pounds or more than 2 pounds per man. On another claim, dammed and worked by 5 men, the sum of \$7000 was taken out last week. Over \$1000 was found in a pan of dirt, taken from a crevice. Those who own shares in river claims will hardly work for less than 2 ounces or \$32 per day. That is the way fortunes are made.

Those who have been fortunate already begin to talk of going home, although it is not 4 weeks since the water fell so that any gold could be taken from the river's bed. Not one quarter of the gold in these rich diggings can be taken out this year. The river is dammed and worked by companies. The dams throw back the water over more surface of the river than the claims can. After the present companies work out their claims and start for home, other companies will be formed to work all winter. Bank diggings pay well. Wells are dug 20, or 30, or 40 feet deep. The dirt and water are drawn up by means of a windlass. When the bed rock is found, it is followed from 10 to 30 feet. Sperm candles at \$1.50 per lb are used to give light for digging. The other day I went into a hole in the bank above high water mark, that extended over 50 feet. The men were making 2 ounces per day per man. The timid had better stay at home. Large rocks are dug under or over, as suits convenience. Hard gravel, cemented with iron, zinc, or dried clay, form the roofs and sides of these dug out caverns. It is perfectly astonishing to see what immense labor men perform here for the precious ore. In Michigan men do not work so; nor any

where else, except on the canals in New York. But gold will pay for as much labor daily as the human frame can endure. In California we work at anything for money. This is no place for drones. But men sometimes break down under toil and exposure. For myself I never enjoyed better health in all my life than I do here. I am free from the sameness and drudgery of teaching school. This life is all action. If a man will come to California with \$5000, he can soon get as rich as the most avaricious can desire, by speculation. If a man lands at San Francisco now without from \$100 to \$500 in money, he can do little or nothing. He cannot reach the mines, and he will find it extremely difficult to find work. He must look out for work to keep himself from going without a breakfast or supper; and he must keep a good look out too. Such crowds are daily arriving by water, that San Francisco and Sacramento are thronged with idle men; and the thermometer is from 90 to 112 degrees now in the valleys in the shade in the middle of the day. Here in the mountains we have the purest air that man ever breathed. I have heard of only three deaths since I have been in the mountains; and disease in those cases was contracted elsewhere. But some men suffer terribly in California. The overland emigration is coming in by the American river by thousands; and such suffering and starvation is horrible in the extreme. The people of Sacramento have contributed for their relief, and sent a large train of mules loaded with provisions to meet the emigrants. Last year the overland emigration left the States with too large a supply of provisions; but, this year they had too little. Either extreme is dangerous; but the latter is fatal. Men can eat a steak cut from a dead ox or horse; but, it is well to try such fare awhile, before necessity compels on the plains. The men just from the plains can do nothing because they have endured so much while coming. Next year they may give some account of themselves to their friends at home.

In reference to the extent and richness of the gold mines, nothing can be said with any definiteness. Every day, week, or

month, new diggings are discovered that pay well. Even the old diggings are not exhausted. So far it seems that only the top has been skimmed, while the beds of the rivers and the bowels of the mountains are comparatively untouched. Five, ten, or twenty years may tell something of the rich destiny of California. There is young men, who can stay a few years may make a fortune, either in the mines, or at some trade adapted to a new country. There is abundant scope for enterprise. The climate is decidedly healthy. Aside from mining, which is something like gambling in receiving the favors of fortune, farming is decidedly the best business in this embryo State. Only think of \$20 to \$30 a bushel for wheat—a profit of \$7,000 for an acre of onions—20 to 30 dollars for a bushel of potatoes—from 100 to 500 dollars for a fat beef—24 dollars for a bushel of barley for mule feed. All kinds of grain and garden vegetables can be cultivated in the valleys during the wet season, while in the dry season the ground must rest. The old Spanish population will not work on a farm. They live on beef, mutton, milk, and onions, and buy their wheat. California wants American farmers. Land is worth from 5 to 20 dollars per acre, and can be readily purchased with a Spanish or Mexican title. Here Government owns large tracts of arable land, which will soon be brought into the market. Carpenters, Shoemakers and Blacksmiths are wanted. A coarse cowhide boot sells for 12 dollars, and a course shoe for five. A blacksmith shop is better than a river claim. Post offices have been established at different places. The one nearest this place is Maysville, near the mouth of the Yuba, which is some 80 miles distant. Weekly expresses run from this place down. The price of bringing up a letter is two dollars and a half: and for carrying down a letter only fifty cents. The New York Tribune, Herald, or any paper from the States costs me \$1 a number. A paper printed at San Francisco or Sacramento costs 50 cts. a number delivered here. A newspaper is read here. It is passed from one camp to another until it is actually worn out. In this part of the mines the people are

mostly Americans: and the entire feeling is American. Law and order prevail. The gambling tables give rise to some contention and fighting; but, only one man has been badly cut up lately with a knife, and the offender received 40 lashes on the bare back, well laid on, and notice to leave in 24 hours. The application of salt and water did not detain him long. Last Sunday a man knocked another over, and was bound over for trial under heavy bonds. A jury of miners make quick work of justice. That is what makes everything secure here without lock or key. It is for the interest of every man to be honest, and respect the rights of his fellow-man. But I must close. I have had a chase of two days over the mountain after my mule, that I had turned out into the long pasture. I found her in a little valley of pea vines, luxuriating most gloriously. Old Whitey must be sold. I cannot chase over the mountains after her. Deer are plenty. A large buck was shot only a few rods from a miner's camp, this morning. The report of the rifle roused me at day-light. A venison steak is savory on a miner's palate.

Yours,

Thomas S. Myrick.



December 4, 1850

Yuba and Feather Rivers—Sacramento— October 12, 1850.

Having traveled 1,000 miles during the last month, over the mountains and through the valleys of California, I purpose to trouble you with a short letter descriptive of the present state of things on the Pacific coast. Mining on the Yuba is drawing to a close for the season. For the last three weeks, there have been tremendous thunder and rain storms, and in some places snow on the mountains. Some of the richest claims have been abandoned on account of the loss of dams, and destruction of races. To give you a correct idea of things, I will state that the Yuba has been worked from 10 miles of its mouth to 100 miles up into the mountains,—also, its branches, ravines, gulches and

bars. The great rush of Americans has been on the Yuba and Feather rivers, this season. Every rod of the Yuba, its bars, beds, flats, ravines, banks and islands, have been claimed and worked. As a general thing, 80 feet square is a claim for one man, particularly in rich diggings. The melting on the Sierra Nevada mountains, kept the rivers up till July, when gold digging commenced in right good earnest, and it continued till the last of September. August was the best month for work. Now there is little doing on the Yuba, except bank diggings.

The rush to the Yuba mines commenced in February. In March and April, every place was prospected to within 40 miles of the dividing ridge of the Sierra Nevada. Provisions and tools for mining were transported over the mountain ridges, along mule trains, where the snow was ten and twenty feet deep. River claims were watched till they could be worked in July. Stores and tent taverns were established everywhere, for the accommodation of miners, speculators and traveller. In this great rush, it required the greatest activity to even get a claim of 30 feet, anywhere on the river or its branches. No estimate can be correctly formed of the number of men on the Yuba, Feather, or other rivers. At Downieville, at the forks of the north fork of the Yuba, it was estimated that there were 10,000 men on a space of 5 miles, which place was 80 miles above Marysville. All who held claims expected to dig their pile; but, alas, thousands and thousands have been most sadly disappointed. Not over 100 men have held claims that have yielded 1 to 4 pounds of gold a man a day. One company at Siccard's Bar, of 7 men, one at Foster's Bar of 8 men, and at Downieville, one of 8 and one of 20 men, have made their fortune,—from \$20,000 to \$100,000 a man. Some few have also made piles in wells and bank claims. But look on the other side of the picture. The great majority of miners, who toiled and delved as hard as the few favored by the goddess of fortune, have no show at all for their summer's work. Now, what is the result? The for-

tunate go home with their dust. The arrival of \$2,000,000 by the last steamer is heralded all over the Union, and everybody wants to be in California. But, what becomes of the unfortunate? Those who dug enough to pay their passage home, return to their friends and families, being also satisfied with having seen the elephant. And those who have nothing, crowd to the dry diggings for the winter, or go down to Sacramento city, and work on the levee at \$75 per month and board! A rough estimate has been made, that only one in 200 men have made any thing in the mines this summer. Now these are facts which insane people at home will not believe, but which a few touches of gold digging will verify.

The overland emigration are still coming in from the plains. But such suffering and destitution I never witnessed before any where, not even in the lanes of our eastern cities. I have seen wagons moving along, drawn by skeleton cattle and followed by ragged and starving men, women, [!] and children. [!!] Such sights are enough to make the heart sick. What the poor creatures will do during the rainy season is more than can be told. It seems that nearly the whole of the people of Missouri have come over the plains this year. Those who arrived in August and September, have done well; but, there are thousands yet coming or trying to come. Relief trains of mules with provisions have been sent from the Sacramento valley to Carson river, and even to Mary's, and Humboldt rivers. In Carson valley, and at the Hay meadow, 100 miles beyond, east of Carson valley, speculators have sold flour at five dollars per pound! (Our old friend, S. T. Carr, had to pay that price at the Hay Meadow.) In Carson valley, a span of mules or horses, or a yoke of cattle, have been sold for 10 pounds of flour! Diarrhoea, mountain fever and cholera have followed the emigration to Carson valley, where we hope those scourges will stop. The rush into the Sacramento is so great that the price of labor has fallen to \$3 per day, which will only board

a man there. Mechanics are glad to get work at \$5 per day. But thousands are worn out and not able to work. Friend Carr lost his splendid team and came in on foot. How many will come from Michigan over the plains next year? Those who intend to come that way, next year certainly ought to know the situation of things this year. Those who came early, with good ox teams and plenty of provisions, have done well enough. Last week I saw one company of 9 Missourians who have driven over the plains 500 head of cows, that are worth \$150 a head in California. They intended to ranch their cattle on Cache creek during the rainy season. As a general thing, this year the emigration had too little a supply of provisions, and started so late that they could not diverge from the road to find their stock. Nearly all the teams that I have seen arrive safely, are ox teams. Horses and mules are not safe, unless the mules are packed through. Horses fare poorly. The overland route is hard enough at any rate. Hundreds from the plains, if they have money enough, take passage by water for home without stopping hardly over night in Sacramento. The poor fellows ought to stay long enough to pare out a little gold for specimens to carry to their friends! There are probably not less than 400,000 people in California now; and the emigration is 50,000 more.

The rush to California is doing one thing to a dead certainty. It is settling the Pacific coast, and widening this America of ours prodigiously. This fall, men are acting sensibly. Actual settlers are locating in the beautiful valleys of the Yuba, Feather, and Sacramento rivers, Cache creek, Suisoon Bay, Napa river, San Joaquin river, and San Jose. I have just been through the first four valleys, and have seen the gathering of the harvest. All garden vegetables grow with little culture. Corn, wheat, barley, oats, and potatoes grow well, I have seen excellent California potatoes for sale in the market of Sacramento at 17 cents per pound, or \$10.20 per bushel, not two weeks since. Green corn, pumpkins, and all garden articles are

plenty there even on tables where only 75 cents is charged for a meal. But California is better for raising stock than grain, because irrigation is necessary in the dry season. In January is the time for plowing, and sowing grain. In the dry season, or from June to November or December, the ground is so dry and hard, that ploughing is out of the question. But the native cattle and horses are entirely superior in blood and beauty to American stock. It takes the California or Oregon horse to run down a wild cow for beef. The best beef I ever eat anywhere is common in the valleys here. And such veal, too,—it is more like fat mutton. And then deer, antelope, elk, rabbit, and squirrel are all over the plains, and mountains and valleys.

But I give you the last paragraph now, after having wearied your patience I fear. I am now on Siccard's Bar, 18 miles above Marysville, on the Yuba. I am writing this letter in the store of friend S. T. Carr, who is doing well enough here, and who has made more money in three weeks than a Jackson merchant can in six months. His store is made of poles covered with tent cloth, and is 18 by 30 feet. The ground is the floor. Everything that miners want is sold cheap for dust,—for example, flour 18 cents per pound, pork 30 d., beans 35 do., hard bread 25 do., crackers 50 do., raisins 1 do., brandy \$4 per gallon, tea \$1 per lb., vinegar \$4 per gallon, common coarse boots \$18 per pair, woolen shirts, \$4 each, &c., &c. We have a small cook stove and board ourselves. The savory dishes that we cook! only the ladies at home could do better, in our estimation. Here is a good place for the rainy season. Let it rain. It does rain in California *sometimes*. Then it makes up for holding up so long during the dry season. So I thought while on the mountains, 80 miles above here, three weeks ago. At night we lock the store by hanging up blankets at the front door! Nobody steals any thing in California except gold dust; and a few rascals have lifted a few bags along the Yuba, this fall, and taken the Atlantic slope. One fellow sloped last week with \$10,000. His acquaintances on the Yuba would like to swing him from the limb of

a pine or oak—if they could catch him. I lost only \$300 by him, and Ford & Co, \$800. His name is J. B. Murray, of Ohio. Pass him round.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



April 30, 1851, Park's Bar, Yuba Co., January 23, 1851.

James A. Dyer, Esq.:

Dear Sir—It is more than a year since I bid you farewell in the Wolverine State, for a residence in the new Eureka State. Last April, I started from San Jose, for the Yuba mines, where I have prospected from its mouth to the source of its branches, from the plains to the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada and where I am now, daily using the pick and shovel. I am twenty miles above Marysville, the county seat of this county. Park's and Siccard's bars, which are separated by a small ravine, are quite as rich as any in California. Large piles have been taken out of the river here, and from its banks. It being now winter, the digging is confined to the banks. The gold is all fine, that is, in small particles or scales, from the weight of a pin's head to the finest grain of sand; so fine that they are hardly discernable by the naked eye. Miners use quicksilver to collect the gold, thus forming an amalgum, of the color of quicksilver. It is retorted, in a retort, or on an old shovel, over a fire, and the gold alone remains in its virgin purity. A year ago, the banks here were all dug over, and now the digging is mostly working the tailings of last winter's work. At first the bank claims paid from one to six ounces per day, for a man; but now, they only pay from one fourth of an ounce, to two ounces per day, for a man. Claims that pay the best are worth hundreds of dust, (dollars,) meaning bank bills, being all yellow backs, and discounted at sight. Wages here are four, five and six dollars per day. I am in a company of five men, who work a quicksilver machine. My share is half a ounce per day on an average.

Some days I get six dollars, then again twelve, of pure gold. Is not two hundred dollars a month, better than thirty dollars for the same time, to say nothing of teaching school in Jackson? The miner on the Yuba, and the schoolmaster at Jackson, would hardly be recognized as the same individual, judging from outward appearance. Indeed, my friend, this mountain life has run my weight up to 150 pounds, full 20 pounds heavier than I ever before weighed. Just now the idea takes me, that if Brother Foster (Fred) could take a daguerreotype, and place it among the galaxy of Past Grands, it would be of the Patriarch order than of any thing more subordinate. Day before yesterday, six men from Jackson, happened to meet on this bar, to wit: Messrs. Ford, Lathrop, Church, Carr, R. L. Myrick and myself. There was something of a time comparing the notes of California life. Ford has made the most of the whole crowd, and more than all together. J. & W. Ford are in trade at Marysville. Messrs. Church & Carr are in trade on Siccard's Bar. Messrs. Lathrop, Rockwell & Fish are in trade at Nelson's creek, a branch of Feather River. Messrs. Carr, R. L. Myrick & Slosser of Illinois, are in a ten pin alley. All the Jackson emigration are well as far as heard from. None died of cholera. There is an abundance of snow on the mountains, so deep that mule trains cannot force their way with provisions to important diggings, where are hundreds of mines. Lathrop & Co. run a train of 30 mules. Lathrop tells me he thinks of sending for his family. Mr. O. Freeman is two miles from this Bar. He says he shall go home as soon as possible. A change has come over California. All articles of merchandize are now three times cheaper than they were three months ago. For instance, boots then sold on this bar for \$25 can now be bought for \$4. Potatoes, that sold for 25 cts. a pound, can now be purchased for 14 cents per pound. Merchants are failing in San Francisco, Sacramento and Marysville. Their goods are sold at auction. Peddlars purchase and supply the miners at a small advance. The merchants on this Bar are now making nothing. This winter the miners stay

in the mountains, and do not go below to winter. The weather has been so very fine that miners have not lost two weeks' time on account of the rainy season. I never saw such a winter before. On this bar, there has not been a particle of snow. The climate now is like the Indian summer of Michigan. There is a hard frost at night, but I can work all day without a coat, and perspire even then. It is most delightful weather. Friend Dyer, this climate would suit you completely. But I shall urge no man to come to California now. There are hundreds in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Marysville, who are working for their board and nothing more. The poor fellows had better come up here and dig, as many are now doing every day. There will be close dodging in California another year. Business must come down from an inflated position of speculation. Men are becoming tired of digging; so they turn their attention to other business. I thank you for sending the Prayer Book, which has been duly received. There is so much drinking, gambling and other species of iniquity in this country that I think I can use it to some advantage on some of the *hombres!* By the way, a cargo of French girls has arrived from Paris. They were all taken for wives or mistresses by men who paid their passage money. Dog cheap! Another assorted cargo has arrived from Mexico, only about \$30 a head to be paid for wives, passage being cheaper from the coast! So it goes. This is a great country. Do you read in history of wives having been sold in Virginia for tobacco? True as history!

Give my respects to the brothers of the Odd Fellows and Masonic orders, and believe me.

Your Bro. & Comp.,
Thomas S. Myrick



May 28, 1851, Park's Bar, Yuba Co., April 1st, 1851.

Friend DeLand: There is a very great diversity of soil and climate in California almost every variety being exhibited from

the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, to the Pacific. During the winter, or wet season, snow falls on the ridges of the former to the depth of from five to ten feet, while in the valleys of the coast, it never falls, rain supplying its place most copiously. In the mountains, the climate is cold and severe; while in the valleys it is perennial spring, all kinds of vegetation growing most luxuriantly. Such is the winter or wet season from the 1st of December to the 1st of May. The balance of the year is the summer or dry season, when no rain falls. In the mountains, then, the air is pure, the heat being excessive only for an hour or two in the middle of the day, while even in August, the mercury is at the freezing point between day-light and sunrise. In the valleys, during the dry season, the heat is intense during the day, while the nights are cool and pleasant.

The soil in the mountains is generally of a red gravel, with clay. Huge granite boulders are found everywhere, and slate and quartz rock out-crop on every ridge. Pine, spruce, and cedar trees, grow to an enormous height, often towering upward three hundred feet. Wild-pea, cabbage, onion, peppermint, raspberry, plum, gooseberry and soap-root are found in abundance on the mountain sides, growing amidst a profusion of nameless woods and bushes. There are numerous valleys in the mountains, watered by rippling streams, where wild grass is found profusely. Along the base of the Sierra Nevada, instead of the lofty cedar and spruce, the hills are covered with a sparse growth of oak peculiar to California, and somewhat resembling in size and shape, old orcharding of apple. Grass and wild flowers abound, also clumps of bushes and esculent roots. Throughout the mountains there is an abundance of game, grizzly bears, flat-tailed deer, antelope, hare, rabbit, quail, duck, goose, and some few animals of the tiger species. The mountain streams teem with beautiful fish.

In the valleys, from the base of the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific, the soil appears to be alluvial. Along the rivers, it is of a rich sandy loam, producing wild grass and clover throughout

the whole year. Oak openings skirt the streams of water. During the wet season, the valleys can be cultivated most easily, all kinds of grain growing well; but in the dry season, no land can be cultivated, unless it can be irrigated. In the valleys of the Sacramento, Feather and Yuba, only one crop can be raised in a year, because the banks of the river are so high that irrigation cannot be effected without great expense and labor; otherwise, two crops might be raised on the same land each year. Timber is scarce between the mountains and the coast. The oak of the valleys hardly gives one rail cut; hence, farmers at the present time make their fences of poles and stakes, withed by strips of green hide.

My last Tribune tells of its editor having received a potatoe weighing $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. But such things are no novelty here. I have seen potatoes, onions, pumpkins, squashes, watermelons, &c., so large here, that a description of them would not be believed unless vouched for by Greeley. No one in Michigan can form any idea of the richness of the soil in the valleys of California. Everything sown grows with little culture. There is as much difference between *the West* and *your West*, as there is between the soil of Michigan and the granite hills of N. Hampshire.

I presume that every one writing home describes California, as it appears to him, at the locality where he happens to be at the time he writes. But no State in the Union has such a variety of soil, climate and productions as this new Eureka State. From its own resources, to say nothing of its gold mines, it is destined to be the richest State in the Union. Commerce, agriculture, lumber trade, and gold dust open a field for enterprise and industry for a generation of years in futurity. As one's *dust-bag*, is filled with the golden ore, he looks out upon the scenery of California, with a more satisfied air, and scans its forest mountains and prairie valleys with a better eye, than when he is just off the plains or the ocean, sick and haggard,

when a pound of flour and a pound of meat are worth more to him than all California.

To bring this letter to a close, I will add there has been rain in the valleys and snow in the mountains, continually for the last three weeks. And the rain came most opportunely. It has brought vegetation forward. Now the "Gold diggers" will have feed for their mules and horses, and potatoes and garden vegetables will glut the mines and miners. But, it does rain here, when it once begins. Noah's deluge is hardly a comparison. I have friends on this Bar now, who have just returned from *prospecting* the Trinity, Scott, Salmon, North Yuba and North Feather rivers. There is so much snow that nothing can be done in the mountains for a month to come, and perhaps not before June. A great many, who undertook to winter in the mountains, did well enough until February; since which time, there has been much suffering. This Bar is 20 miles above Marysville. There has been no snow here during the winter; but, last week, snow fell on the tops of the hills about five miles above this Bar. Some 500 French have come up here—just arrived from France. Every nation under heaven have sent a delegation to California. The principal rush is for the Yuba and Feather mines. Please send me the Citizen regularly to Marysville. The Jackson boys are all well, and doing well.

Yours,
T. S. Myrick



August 6, 1851, Park's Bar, Yuba River, May 1st, 1851.

Friend DeLand: The mining season has fairly opened. Every day there are parties going up to the mountains to prospect. Week before last the rainy season closed. The weather is now warm and pleasant. Put it on record that on Park's Bar, on the 28th of April, mercury stood at 99 degrees in the shade at 2 o'clock, on the 29th at 100 degrees in the shade and 120 in

the sun, and on the 30th at 96 degrees in the shade. Yesterday (the 30th) I worked all day, and found it quite hot enough for comfort. I was in a ravine where there was not a particle of air in motion, and the reflection of the sun's rays from the rocks seemed to increase the heat. I only made as much as a Congressman without mileage. The small streams of water are drying up so fast in the ravines, that all who intend to dig must go to the mountains. Very few of the ravines can be worked here now, for want of water. The snow on the mountains is melting so fast, that the old Yuba is rushing and swelling over all our claims, races, and mining works.

Week before last I visited Marysville on business. I was perfectly surprised to see the improvements of the city. Only one year ago there was only a small settlement there, with a cluster of tents for stores, boarding and gambling houses. Property was perfectly secure without lock and key, Now, see the change. Marysville is a city, having a Mayor and a board of aldermen. There are elegant brick and wooden hotels, stores, gaming saloons, and private residences. The hotels are as well conducted as the Railroad and National at Detroit, or the American and Empire at Jackson. The El Dorado, the principal gaming house, occupied a whole corner block, with entrances from each street. A band of music performs every night; throughout the whole saloon, there are rows of tables loaded with piles of Mexican dollars, American gold coin, and bags of dust, where gamblers preside to empty the dust bag of the miner, on the turn of a card. At some of the tables, prostitutes sit with exposed person to draw the crowd. They are the mistresses of the gamblers. The streets of Marysville are crowded with teams and mule trains, loading and packing all kinds of provisions and merchandise for the miners. Every profession is fully represented. Doctors and lawyers and courts are in full operation. Merchants, clerks are as attentive and obsequious as in an eastern city. The luxuries of the world can be bought cheap for dust.

One year ago every business man in Marysville wore a miner's dress—woolen shirt and very coarse pants. Now, broad-cloth and fine cassimere are the order of the day. Every man has his fine linen, sporting a huge *specimen* worked into a breast pin, and a finger ring weighing an ounce or more, of the golden dew-drop quality. Fine wear is cheap now,—only \$10 for a Broadway coat, and \$7 for pants to match. It costs more to buy coarse clothing for miners than fine for the city. But, to say nothing of Marysville habits and fashions, for some ten miles around the city the land is all claimed, fenced and cultivated. Gardening and farming are employing the capital and the time of thousands of men. This year the valleys will nearly supply the miners with provisions, or at least approximate towards it. But we must still depend on Chili for flour, and on China for tea, laying the whole world under contribution for the luxuries of life. In the City board is only \$25 a week, or \$4 per day at the best houses. In this market I saw all kinds of garden vegetables, of such size that Mich. farmers would hardly credit a description. By the way, a baker on this Bar, this morning advertises pumpkin pies for sale at only \$1 each. If any one thinks at home that the people almost starve in California, a bill of fare at a Marysville hotel and a waiter at his elbow would soon convince him of the awful march of civilization. All that Marysville lacks now is the healthful influence of virtuous American women. And they are coming; for the last Panama steamer bro't 52, and more on the way.

Messrs. Claflin and Barnes have just arrived from Jackson. They have gone up the Feather river. We have heard all about home and all of friends, which has given us much pleasure. Dr. Kane has gone up the Feather. Mr. Oppenheimer is at Redding's on the Sacramento. Messrs Lathrop, Fish, Rockwell, Stebbins, Freeman, and other Jackson men are up the Feather. Mr. R. L. Myrick has gone with a party into the mountains to prospect. As soon as he returns, we shall shoulder the pick and shovel for a summer's work in the mountains. I must toil one

year more in the mines at the end of which I hope to return to my friends at Jackson,—not to teach school again,—but simply to witness the diffusion of education. I do not wonder that Mr. Claflin has returned to this Eureka State. Aside from the mines of yellow ore, this climate is the best of any country I have seen. The agricultural resources are also very great. One item is in point. Last year considerable was made of wild grass, clover and oats, but not enough for the market. Hay is now selling at from \$120 to \$200 per ton. There is none in the country except bale hay, which is brought into the market on board of vessels. A meadow of clover would now be worth something. Grass and wild clover is in fine grazing order all over the country; but there is so much stock used in transporting goods to the mines, that before July there will be nothing for teams except hay and barley. For 20 or 30 miles around Marysville, every acre of mowable grass is claimed by somebody. If any more intend to come to California from Jackson tell them to make their calculations to arrive in November, buy a farm, work it well, and they will make their pile faster and easier than they can by digging in the mines.

The mines have only just begun to be worked. Individuals have made piles by collecting gold on or near the surface; but as yet the mining has all been surface work. Quartz rock is found in strata or ledges throughout the gold regions. Several quartz rock machines have been put into operation both in the southern and northern mines. They are propelled by steam or water power. The quartz is crushed and the gold that pervades it is collected by the use of quicksilver. I have seen quartz from between the Yuba and Feather that was worth 30 per cent, or 30 cents of gold to a pound of quartz. At the Rough & Ready diggings, a company who have several 20 horse power engines at work, are paying 1 and 2 cents per pound for quartz at the place where it is quarried. Quartz that is worth 10 per cent will give \$30 per day for each man employed. It requires from \$10,000 to \$30,000 capital to operate in quartz mining; but

there is a large field opened and capital will reap the Golden harvest.

Please to send me the Citizen regularly to Marysville. The new postage law will benefit California which is a thorough Whig State. Party lines are being drawn here now. Next Saturday the first Whig meeting is to be held on this Bar. We go for the good old Whig cause. There are no Free Soilers here. Democrat and Whig are the parties. It is proposed to have a Whig to represent this State in the U.S. Senate, and we are commencing right in the primary assemblies. This year we also elect a Governor and State and County officers. Put the Eureka State on the top of the Whig pyramid, so that the Golden emblem can be seen in the Wolverine State. Why do you still continue to pelt poor Gen. Cass about the improvement of rivers and harbors? Oh! The "*noise and confusion*" of the next Presidential campaign! Our Newspapers here have already opened the ball, on the defeat of the river and harbor bill in Congress.

Yours,

Thomas S. Myrick



August 6, 1851, Park's Bar, Yuba River. May 22, 1851

C. V. DeLand, Esq., Dear Sir: It may be of some little interest to your readers to know somewhat of the political as well as the mining affairs of this State.

The elections for the first and second Legislatures were without distinction of party. Each candidate, nominated either by himself or his friends, electioneered for himself, on either personal considerations or on pledges of doing the State some service. The result of the elections shows a majority for the Democrats. A system of wild and reckless expenditure has characterized the action of the Democratic party. The first Legislature is called by way of distinction, "The Legislature of a thousand drinks." The second has been little better than the

first, only exhibiting great zeal in the distribution of the spoils of office. Whigs, elected by the people for county and district offices, have been removed by the Executive, to make room for Democrats. It seems that the only object has been to plunder the public funds. Large amounts of dust collected from miners by law have never reached the treasury. Bribery and corruption have been charged against the Democrats, in the removal of the capital from San Jose to Vallejo, and in the sale or gift of State lands to private individuals.

Amidst all this corruption, the patriotic men of both parties have commenced a thorough party organization. Town and county Whig and Democratic conventions have been held, the old party issues brought out, and delegates sent to the two State conventions, for the nomination of suitable candidates for Governor and other State officers. The Democratic convention is to be held at Benicia, and the Whig convention at San Francisco on Monday next. The Whigs in the mines are waking up. There have been two large Whig meetings on this bar, of miners from the river, ravine, and the gulch. The miners seem determined to have a part in making laws for themselves. The Democrats held a meeting on this bar two weeks ago. There were present the Governor, U.S. Senator, several Members of the Legislature, and other office-holders, but the people were not there. This country is Whig all over. The Marysville Herald (tri-weekly) has unfurled the Whig banner. The cities of San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento, and Marysville are largely Whig in their late municipal elections. The city of Nevada is Democratic.

Put down the Eureka State as Whig in the next Presidential election.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick

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October 15, 1851,

Park's Bar.

Aug. 27, 1851.

Friend DeLand. The Election in the Eureka State is to be held on next Wednesday. For the purpose of showing you the position of the Whig and Locofoco parties, before the election, I send you the platform of each party, as put forth in the resolutions of the two State Conventions.

The following are the Whig resolutions adopted in State Convention at San Francisco, in May last:

Resolved, That in the adjustment of disputed land titles in this State, we are in favor of the same being referred to the decision of Commissioners under authority of the General Government, with the right of appeal from such decision, by any party interested, to the proper United States Courts.

Resolved, That the dictates of good policy and the simple demands of justice, require at the hands of the General Government the early extension of the pre-emption laws over the public domain not embraced within the mineral lands of this State—the adoption of such laws as shall secure to actual settlers a donation of such public lands, not exceeding 160 acres, to each head of a family—and also to provide grants of the public lands to be made to such persons as have settled upon private lands within this State, and made valuable improvements upon them in good faith, supposing the same to a part of such be public domain.

Resolved, That we are in favor of the General Government granting to this State for the purpose of education and works of internal improvement, a quantity of public lands, at least equaling the grants heretofore made, or hereafter to be made, to the most favored States of the Union in this respect.

Resolved, That we are in favor of liberal appropriations by the General Government for works of a public character especially the improvement of rivers and harbors.

Resolved, That we are in favor of the adoption of such proper measures by the General Government as shall most

speedily tend to foster and aid the construction of a Rail Road, connecting this State with the Mississippi Valley.

Resolved, That the establishment of steam communication between this State, Sandwich Islands and China, is of the utmost importance, and will tend greatly to the advancement of the commercial and political condition of the whole Union, and especially of California—Therefore we approve of the adoption of a liberal policy by the General Government in aid of such an enterprise.

Resolved, That the failure of Congress to make provisions for a Mint in California has been greatly detrimental to the interests of the people of the State, and our present condition and wants urgently demand that early and ample appropriations be made for that object.

Resolved, That we have a just and equitable claim on the general government for such moneys as were collected by her officers as revenue on imports into the State prior to our admission into the Union.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the general government to assume the indebtedness of this State, necessarily contracted in the protection and defence of her citizens from Indian warfare.

Resolved, That we will ever maintain the execution and supremacy of the laws, and that the people may not be subjected to onerous and oppressive taxation, we are in favor of the strictest economy in the administration of the State and general government.

Resolved, That the recent compromise measures by Congress receive our cordial approbation and in defence of the Constitution and Union we will ever be found faithful and true.

The following are the Locofoco resolutions adopted in State Convention at Benicia, in May last:

Resolved, That we will maintain the doctrines of the Democratic party as transmitted to us by Jefferson, Madison and Jackson.

Resolved, That the mineral lands of California ought not to be sold by the Government, but granted to the miners and the emigrants, who are American citizens.

Resolved, That all public lands of California ought to be reserved by the government from sale, and granted to citizens and actual settlers.

Resolved, That although the State of California has been the last to be admitted into the Union, she will not be found to be the last in the discharge of her duties as a sovereign State, and that she will give a faithful support to the Constitution and the Union.

Resolved, That the administration of the general government have been guilty of the most culpable neglect of the higher interest of California—that they have failed to protect the frontiers against the Indians, and have utterly disregarded the wants and demands of the people as to the postal arrangements of the State, and have failed to carry into effect laws actually passed for the good of the State.

By comparing the two sets of resolutions, you will see the correct position of the two parties. The candidates are actively canvassing the whole State. There are to be elected two Representatives for Congress, all the officers of State, District, County and Township. The result of the Election must affect somewhat the political affairs of the whole Union, and have its influence in the next Presidential campaign. The Whigs have heretofore carried the charter elections of every city in the State, where a ticket has been run on party grounds. The different cities, and the various agricultural districts, may be safely put down as Whig. In those places, the population is somewhat fixed and stationary! and the political complexion can be determined with some certainty. But in the mines, where the population is more transitory, and where people pass from Bar to Bar weekly and almost daily, it is almost impossible to count with any certainty on the result of the Election. The mines will give the casting and deciding vote in the contest.

Candidates find some work before them in canvassing. For instance, in the county of Yuba, there are eight townships, and fifty two election polls or precincts, comprising an area of over eighty miles in length by some forty in breadth. The candidates for State and Congressional offices make speeches on every principle Bar, while the nominees for County offices visit every ravine, Gulch, Canon, bar and nearly every camp or tent. The party that is beat will be out of pocket some few thousands of dollars! A great many of the miners are entirely indifferent about party politics, and will vote just as their fancy leads them on seeing and hearing the different candidates. It will be almost impossible, to get a strict party vote in the mines. But, so far as position and interest and argument are concerned the Whigs have the mines on their side!—so much, so indeed, that the Loco candidates are backing water on the Loco principle of “grant-in the mineral lands,” and that they be held and worked as they are now by American citizens. The Locos are driven to the wall on the mineral land question. No land monopoly can prevail in this State. The people are also in favor of pre-emption rights on agricultural lands, and no land monopolist can be selected to any office whatever.

yours,

Thomas S. Myrick.



January 21, 1852.

Park's Bar,

Nov. 18, 1851.

Friend DeLand—At different times, I have sent you letters descriptive of the climate and soil of California. Aside from its gold mines, perhaps there is no “*western*” State than can compete with the Eureka State in facilities for agricultural wealth and improvement. A Mr. Shelton recently opened an Agricultural and Mineral Fair at San Francisco, where the products of this country were exhibited. Andrew Williams, Esq., delivered an address. A committee was chosen to award premiums. A large number of ladies and gentlemen from different parts

of the State visited the exhibition. John M. Horner, Esq., of Santa Clara, obtained the premium of a silver goblet for the finest vegetable productions. He has 800 acres under cultivation in the valley of San Jose, near the Mission of Santa Clara, about 60 miles south of San Francisco. He has employed 60 laborers on his farm. His improvements have cost him \$50,000. His year's crop at present prices is worth \$200,000. He has cleared four times the amount of capital invested. The following table is an exhibit of his crop:

Potatoes,	12,000 bush.
Onions,	9,000 bush.
Table beets,	4,000 bush.
Turnips,	1,000 bush.
Tomatoes,	1,200 bush.
Barley,	5,000 bush.
Pumpkins,	30 tons.
Solid headed cabbages,	108,000
Chickens,	600
Eggs,	1,200 dozen
Onion seed,	800 lbs.
Beet seed,	200 lbs.
Cabbage seed,	100 lbs.

Mr. Horner is a young man from New Jersey. He is a California farmer. Instead of taking his "pile" to his native State, he has invested his money here. You see the result. But, Mr. Horner is not the only farmer here. Messrs. Chamberlain & Musser have raised about 70,000 pounds of onions on one acre of ground. Onions retail on this Bar at 37½ cts. per pound. At Marysville they are worth at least 20 cts. per lb., which would give \$15,000 for the produce of one acre. Another farmer in the San Jose valley has raised 965 bushels of barley on less than 6 acres, which is at least 193 bushels to an acre. Barley is worth at Marysville 8¼ cts. per pound, at wholesale. At 60 lbs. per bushel, the produce of one acre of barley amounts to \$897.45. Madame Scooffy, of the Sonora Valley has raised on

12 acres a crop of barley amounting to 53,000 pounds, which is worth at Marysville \$4,107.50, according to the "city prices current," of the Herald. Mr. H. Speed of Santa Cruz has raised 120 lbs, or two bushels of potatoes from five vines of a single hill. Mr. Horner, by the table above, raised 1,200 dozen of eggs, which are worth \$4 per dozen, or \$4,800 for the lot. The mines afford a ready market for all the products of the agricultural parts of the State.

If I remember right, a Michigan Farmer does 'very well' if he raises 30 bushels of wheat to the acre. Indeed, I believe that many farmers only raise from 15 to 20 bushels on an acre. And still there is no better flour sold in the New York market, than the Michigan brand. But, the truth is that California has not only astonished the whole world in the richness and extent of her mines of gold and quicksilver, but she bids fair to beat the whole Union besides, in the surprising variety and exuberance of her agriculture. If the California fever has not abated, some young Michigan men may conclude to start for the El Dorado of their day dreams; but, let every reader of the Citizen stay where he is, unless he can come here with at least \$1,000, and then stay in the country. Men with families should not think of coming here, unless they emigrate with all the live souls of their household. Neither farming nor mining can now be successfully prosecuted without some capital. The wages of a hired man on a farm are \$50 a month and found; but, where there is one man who wishes to hire, there are at least 100 men who desire to be employed at some price. High prices are steadily falling, and business is seeking the ordinary operations of the older States. We hail this appearance as a harbinger of permanent prosperity to our Eureka State. The settlement of this country is dependent upon it.

In reference to mining, I will add that every day's discovery proves that the mines of California are inexhaustable. Only the surface of the ground has as yet been dug over, while the hills and mountains of the whole Sierra Nevada remain to be dug

out and up-turned. Mining in the rivers is over for the season. Last Monday the rains came, and the waters of the Yuba broke loose from the confines of races and dams, and regained their wonted channel. After 24 hours of rain, the rise of water was so sudden that pumps fooms, machines, and all mining tools remaining in claims were swept away. This year the rainy season commenced on the morning of Nov. 17th. Bank, ravine, and quartz mining must be prosecuted till next May or June, when miners will return again to the river diggings. Those men who have been successful this year, and others who have only their passage money, are rushing down the mountains on their way home to their friends and families. Wagons, stage-coaches, and steamboats are crowded with passengers. Many are going home after their wives or sweet-hearts to return and settle in this golden State. I notice by the San Francisco papers, that every steamer from Panama comes loaded with new adventurers, among whom there is a goodly number of American women. Californians rejoice about as much at the arrival of American women, as they do when they strike a lead of gold. The following extract is from the address of Andrew Williams, Esq., at the San Francisco celebration. Please to let your readers see the whole of it.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



As we approach the center of the State, the banana, the orange, the lemon, the olive, the fig, the plantain, the nectarine, the almond, the apricot, and the pomegranite of the South, mingle in the same luxuriant gardens of Los Angeles, with the peach, the pear, and the cherry, the plum, the quince, and the apple of the North—the fruits of the oak and the pine, of gigantic size and delicious taste, furnishing to man and beast the richest and most nutritious food, the beautiful salmon of the Sacramento, often weighing thirty, forty, and in some instances,

sixty pounds vieing with any, either in fineness of texture and richness of flavor, as well as in size—and one uncommon article of fine white sugar, the exudation of a species of pine called the sugar pine—the successive range of mountains, whose extent is to view in the distance, waving with rich harvest of oats, the spontaneous production of the soil—solid trees of the redwood on the bank of the Trinity and Shasta rivers, sixty-eight feet in circumference; hollow ones whose cavity has sheltered sixteen men and twenty mules for the night; pines crowning the dizzy peaks of the Sierra Nevada, three hundred and fifty feet without a branch or limb—an extent of growth so far beyond the ordinary size, as to seem almost incredible, but well known, and seen and verified by the uniform and concurrent testimony of many whom I see sitting around me.

And we have some still larger and taller specimens of other things nearer home, here in our own city, to which many who hear me will bear witness from experience, and which come to maturity "*monthly in advance*"—rents, the tallest kind of rents, put up higher than the pines, and sometimes harder to get around than the red wood! I hold in my hand a statement signed by twelve citizens of the county of Santa Cruz—Messrs. McLean, Gibson, Malison, Peck, Clements, Pedrict, Mills, Stephens, McHenry, Sanborn, Kista, and Loveland—gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, an extract from which is as follows:

"On land owned and cultivated by Mr. James Williams, an onion grew to the enormous weight of twenty-one pounds; on the same land a turnip was raised which equaled exactly in size the head of a flour barrel. On land owned and cultivated by Thomas Follen, a cabbage grew which measured about 13 feet 6 inches around its body: the weight is not known. The various cereal grains also grew to a height of from 6 to 12 feet. One redwood tree in the valley, known as Fremont's tree, measures over fifty feet in circumference, and is nearly 300 feet high." Added to these astounding productions are, a beet raised

by Mr. Isaac Brannan, at San Jose, weighing 73 pounds; carrots three feet in length, weighing 40 pounds.

At Stockton a turnip weighing 100 pounds. In the latter city, at a dinner party for twelve persons, of a single potato larger than the size of an ordinary hat, all partook, leaving at least the half untouched.

These may be superlatives, but they do exist and they show what our climate and soil are capable of producing. Nor are these more seemingly incredible than the well known fact of a portion of our State, nearly 600 miles in length, and 50 in breadth, whose every foot of ground, from hill-top to valley, is more or less impregnated with gold of every conceivable form and size from dust up to lumps weighing 30 pounds.

But let us cast our eyes around this hall, and what do we see—even from this hasty collection and casual contributions—an agricultural, botanical, geological, mineral, and floral exhibition, embracing nearly one thousand varieties of pressed flowers, of every hue, and of surpassing brilliancy, nearly 200 varieties of which are illustrated by truthful and beautiful drawings; seeds of more than 3000 varieties of native flowers: 20 varieties of lily and other bulbous roots, embracing the remarkable soap plant, rivaling the finest boast of the toilet, and adding to its healing qualities, as if provided by nature for the double purpose of sanitary and abulent properties for the native sons of the forest; specimens of 1000 varieties of the principal quartz veins and soils of the State; about 20 varieties of the principal grapes and clovers, many of the specimens pressed, embracing the burr clover, that feeds to fatness, “the cattle of a thousand hills,” when all other substance is parched and withered; Shelton’s mammoth clover, whose stocks from one root covered an area of 21 square feet, some of the stocks 6 feet long, a half inch in diameter, and the clover head five inches in circumference; single stalks of the white lilly, producing 100 flowers, of indescribable delicacy and beauty; beautiful specimens of minerals and pressed flowers from H. Pratten,

Esq., of Nevada; stocks of the oats gathered by Mr. Shelton, 13 feet high; specimens of wheat and barley having 140 and 200 mammoth stocks springing from one root, the produce of a single seed; the red sugar beet, raised by L. M. Beard, of San Jose, 28 inches in circumference and weighing 47 pounds; some from the luxuriant gardens of Alderman Green, of this city, of only 2 months growth, weighing six or seven pounds; cucumbers, raised by the same, 78 inches in length; onions cultivated by Messrs. Chamberlain & Musser, five, six, and seven inches in diameter, and weighing three and four pounds each—nearly 60,000 pounds to the acre, and the whole number from the acre supposed to average one pound each; potatoes, from Mr. H. Speel, of Santa Cruz, 120 pounds, from five vines of a single hill; one from Mr. B. J. Stevens, of Santa Clare, 17 inches in length, 27 inches in circumference, and weighing 7½ pounds; the Russian bald barley, raised by Mr. Johnson, on his ranch, upon the banks of Bear river, weighing 66 pounds to the bushel, with a kernel double the size of large wheat; raspberries five inches in circumference; barley from the San Jose valley, of which 965 bushels were produced from less than five acres of land; some from the farm of Madame Scooffy, of Sonora, where 12 acres, by ordinary cultivation, produced a crop of 53,000 pounds: these walls festooned with luscious grape from Captain Maltby, of Los Angeles, single bunches from the garden of Gen. Vallejo, at Sonora, weighing 10 pounds; apples, peaches, eggs, and other fruits of enormous size from the same; from Mr. Horner, tomatoes weighing two pounds each; pumpkins and squashes 100 to 140 pounds; cabbages two feet in diameter, and weighing over 50 pounds; onions, beets, and potatoes of enormous size, not isolated, but by hundreds of bushels, the top onion produce the first season from the ordinary seed; with samples of wheat and barley of uncommon size and weight; and added to the exhibition are also beautiful specimens of the daguerreian and photographic art from Mr. Shew, and also from Mr. Bradley; lemon syrup of exceeding excellence, manu-

factured and exhibited by Messrs Sweet & Co., of this city; exquisite feather work by Madame Paocard; besides samples and specimens of countless varieties of plants, herbs, vines, fruit, grain, and esculents of exceeding size and singular perfection, collected by Mr. Shelton, to the enumeration of which the proper extent of this address is wholly inadequate.

Among the tropical productions introduced by him, are coffee, ginger, banana, plantain, and pomegranite, which are now in progress of successful cultivation.



February 18, 1852,

Park's Bar,

Dec. 22, 1851.

Friend DeLand:

Your letter of Oct. 9th I have received; also a package of your paper. I thank you for these favors. The newspapers have teemed with exaggerated accounts of the "Railroad Conspirators," and their long trial and sentence to the State's Prison. At one time I thought that all Jackson was to be encircled by an extension of the walls of the State's Prison. Your letter has disabused my mind very much; but, the victims of perjury are now beyond the reach of sympathy. Our poor friend Fitch, it seems, has died of a broken heart, in a felon's cell. What a terrible affliction to his amiable wife and affectionate daughter! Abel F. Fitch had one friend, even on the Pacific coast. Peace to his ashes!

You compliment me on account of "political preferment." You are too fast. I received the Whig nomination for Co. Treasurer of Yuba Co.; but, although I ran 200 votes ahead of my ticket, still I was defeated by *five* votes! The Eureka State is Loco entirely. The Whigs here are all disappointed, but not more so than the Locos themselves. The returns have at last all come in, except from two counties. The Legislature stands as follows: Senate, 2 Whigs, 33 Locos, 1 Independent, and 1 seat contested by 2 Locos and 1 Whig. Assembly, 71 Whigs, 37 Locos, two seats contested, and two counties of which returns

have not yet been received. The Locos have a majority of at least 37 votes on joint ballot. All of the State officers and the two Representatives to Congress are Locos of course;—and so will also be the U.S. Senator to be chosen by the Legislature in the place of Senator Fremont, who is very unpopular even with his own party .

There is a cause for the present political state of California. The last Loco Legislature passed the famous "Water lot Bill," by which several millions of dollars of property belonging to the State were granted to a few millionaires of San Francisco. The Whigs of the Legislature opposed the "Bill," and charged bribing and corruption upon the Loco majority. An attempt was made by a Whig to investigate the charge, but the Locos crushed the investigation. Therefore, the Whigs lost the vote of San Francisco, where we ought to have the largest vote in the State. Even the Whig paper was obliged to stop, by a withdrawal of patronage. Furthermore, land monopoly is the curse of California. All of the land in the southern part of the State, and most of the land in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys is claimed by a few men under pretended Mexican grants. Major Reading, the Whig candidate for Governor, claims a large tract in the upper Sacramento. There are numerous squatters, who resist the pretensions of the large land claimants. Therefore, the Whigs lost the vote of the whole Sacramento valley, and of course lost the vote of the State. The city of Sacramento turned a complete somerset, and went Loco with an overwhelming vote—The old ranch men voted for Major Reading but the squatters and miners went with a rush for Col. Bigler, the Loco Governor elect.

You enquire about the "boys" from Jackson. The last that I heard of Edward S. Rockwell was that he had gone up to the mountains somewhere on the branches of the Yuba, for the purpose of mining. Ichabod Cole is at Shasta City, near the Sacramento river 150 miles north of Marysville, selling goods. Homer A. Curtis is there, being Loco District Attorney

of Shasta Co. Messrs. McFarlan and B. C. Delamatter were there in October, engaged in mining. Dr. Kane was then at Shasta Valley, still north of Shasta City. He has done well there. E. G. Gould was about 10 miles from Shasta City, digging for gold. I have no later news from our friends at Shasta. R. Luther Myrick has gone to the Southern mines. His health was good when he left this Bar. The two brothers True were here in October. They had done well. I cannot tell where they are now. J. and W. Ford, E. S. Lathrop and L. J. Fish are in partnership in trade at Marysville. They are rich. Lathrop has gone to visit his friends at your town. The Fords say that this country is their home. B. F. Clafflin is on Feather river; I saw him during the summer. He told me that he had some good river claims. R. C. Baker is District Attorney of Butte Co. He lives at Hamilton, a town on Feather river, about 20 miles above Marysville.

The dead body of a young man was found two weeks ago, near the road between Marysville and Hamilton. A bullet hole and a large gash were plainly visible in the left side. It appears that the young man had been murdered and dragged from the road and robbed. One side pocket was found cut off. In the other pocket was a small sum of money, and a piece of poetry purporting to have been written by his cousin, Harriet P. Green, of Albion, Calhoun Co., Michigan, in answer to a farewell letter, addressed to Isaac Pray, of the same place. The body has been interred six miles above Marysville. This information may be of some interest to Mr. P's friends. Also, on the 11th inst., a Mr. George N. Lockwood of Michigan, was killed at San Francisco. He was passing along the side-walk on Clay street near Montgomery st., when a stove pipe and several loose bricks detached from the top of the building by the flapping of the flag on the observatory of Wells & Co's store, which fell upon the head of the unfortunate man, crushing his skull in the most horrid manner, and killing him instantly.

During about a month past, there have been a dozen or more murders on the road to the mines, between the Yuba and

Feather rivers, in the vicinity of Honcet Creek. It has been ascertained that they have been perpetrated by an organized band of Mexicans. Several men have been lassoed, dragged from their horses, robbed and then murdered. For the last two weeks there has been great excitement; for, almost on every by-path or trail, a dead body might be discovered. The sheriff and his deputy attempted to arrest several Mexicans on suspicion, at their camp three miles above Marysville, when he was shot through the body, but fortunately he is yet alive. A large body of men volunteered to capture the Mexicans, but they eluded pursuit. Very recently three of the desperadoes have been caught at Sacramento, brought to Marysville and lodged in jail. They will have the form of trial, but the popular feeling is to have them hung immediately. The public mind is exasperated at such cold-blooded murders, on almost every unarmed traveller.

California is a fast country. Although as a State, she is not one year old, still she finds that mules, horses, stage-coaches and steamboats affords too slow a means of communication between place and place. A company has been organized under State law, to construct a railroad between San Francisco and San Jose, a distance of 51 miles. Another company has been formed, to build a railroad between Sacramento and Marysville, a distance of between 40 and 50 miles. Under the State law, one half of the capital stock must be paid in before a railroad company can be incorporated. In Sacramento, the required amount was subscribed for this latter road in one day! Another railroad is projected between Benicia and Marysville, over 100 miles. While you are talking about the feasibility of a plank road between Jackson and Lansing, over 200 miles of railroad will be constructed, and the steam horse driven puffing and neighing over our plains and prairies at the rate of 40 miles an hour! Look into the future if you can, and tell what California will be—with her improvements, at the end of the next five years. In March, 1850, the steamboat fare between San Fran-

cisco and Marysville was \$50 for one passenger. Now it is only \$6 and excellent accommodations. In March, 1850, I paid \$32 passage between San Francisco and San Jose. Now the fare between these two cities is only \$3 by stage-coach or steamboat. Then a man could not travel to the mines, unless he went with his own horse or mule. Now, there are excellent lines of Boston and New York coaches to all the mines, where a coach and four can be driven, and opposition as lively as in the eastern country. Steamboats are running on all our rivers, where there is depth of water sufficient to float them.

On the 14th of next month, a State Convention of settlers and miners is to be held at Sacramento, to be composed of delegates from all parties of the State. The object of the Convention is to consider and decide on the area of auriferous soil which should, in the several kinds of diggings, constitute a claim, and memorialize Congress on the subject. Also, it is one object to express an opinion whether the golden fields of California should be *leased*, *donated*, or *sold* by Government, and in what quantities. A third object is to urge on Congress and the State the propriety of donating agricultural lands to actual settlers. And a fourth object is to accredit delegates to the Seventh Industrial Congress to be held in the City of Baltimore on the first Wednesday of June next. I shall endeavor to send you some news of the result of the Convention.

I will close this letter by giving you a few items of news. Samuel Gallagher, recently convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to the State Prison (chain gang) for three years, has been pardoned by Gov. McDougall! On the 9th inst., river navigation was resumed between Sacramento and Marysville, by steamboats. On the 9th inst., travelers in the mountains passed over snow six feet deep. For the week ending Dec. 16th, the weather was the finest possible, warm and pleasant during the day, and cold at night, and heavy frost and ice in the morning. On the 1st of Dec. a man was hung by order of Judge Lynch, at Rich Bar, North Fork of Feather River, by the name

of David Brown, of Amsterdam, for stealing \$1600 from his two companions. A company on their own hook, called the Independent Rangers, under Capt. Haig, have gone from San Francisco to San Diego, to stop the Indian war raging in that part of the State. At Onion Valley, Jamieson's Creek, Grass Valley, and other places in the mountains, mining has been stopped by the sudden fall of snow three or four feet deep. A man from Sydney has been arrested at Goodyear's Bar on the Yuba, for murdering and robbing three men recently. Judge Lynch has him in charge. The Land Commissioners, sent out by Government, have arrived, and appointed their meeting to be held on the 31st instant at San Francisco. A marriage took place on Park's Bar, Dec. 10th. There are two other young ladies on the Bar, and 200 young men! An Indian war is commencing in the vicinity of San Diego. The Chief Garra has been captured. Several Farmers have been plundered of their horses and cattle. All the U.S. troops stationed at Benicia and other places, have been sent to the scene of disturbances. The object of the war seems to be to avoid the land tax imposed by the State authorities. Without a doubt, some of the old Spaniards are the instigators, making tools of the Indians. The pleasant weather is over. For the last three days it has rained constantly, and still continues. The Yuba river has risen ten feet in five hours. There is no snow on this Bar, but there must be snow upon the mountains.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



March 3, 1852.

Park's Bar, Yuba Co.,

Jan. 11, 1852.

Friend DeLand:

It is now the wet season here. This is the only season of the year in which there is rain to moisten the soil or start vegetation. Four weeks ago yesterday, it commenced raining, and it did not stop until the expiration of three weeks. A hurricane

of wind was the forerunner of the storm. Tents were blown down, and trees were uprooted or their branches twisted off. On Long Bar, two miles from here, the half of a pine tree fell on a boarding house where some 30 men were sleeping, crushing it to the ground, and strangely killing no one. Canvass houses were blown down on Owsley's, Long's, Parks, Cordwa's, Barton's, and Rose's Bar. Fortunately, no lives were lost, except in one instance, where a limb of a pine tree fell on a tent, instantly killing its sleeping occupant. After the wind, the rain came in deluge torrents. The Yuba river suddenly raised fifteen feet, sweeping from its banks all mining implements that had been left there on Saturday. Thousands of dollars worth of rockers, long-toms, and quicksilver machines, were floating down the river during the first two days of the storm. Timbers used in dams, and boards for flooms shared the same fate. It did not rain every hour of the time for three weeks; but it did every day or night.

The effect of the rain is strikingly apparent. Grass begins to start in the valleys and on the foot-hills of the mountains. A thousand varieties of plants and flowers begin to show themselves above the soil. The ground which was dry and baked by the long continuance of the dry season, is soft and loamy, readily yielding to the shovel or plow. The most of the miners have left the different Bars on the Yuba for dry or ravine diggings. The great rush is to the Southern mines, or to the head waters of the branches of San Joaquin for winter diggings. About 30 miles above this Bar, the mountains are covered with snow to the depth of five or six feet, rendering the trails almost impassable for mule trains. The roads in the valleys are passable; owners of stage coaches keeping up their lines with regularity.

On Monday last, I was at Marysville, visiting our friends Messrs. J. and W. Ford, L. J. Fish, and J. O. Goodwin. I found them in fine health. They are among those who have been entirely fortunate and successful in California. The Messrs.

Ford are worth more than they were while they lived at Jackson. This firm of Ford, Lathrop & Co. is one of the most substantial in the city. Marysville steadily improves. There are nine hotels, all crowded either with regular boarders or the constant rush of travelers. Splendid brick blocks are being erected all over the city. There is hardly a vestige of the late disastrous fire, which burned up nearly one half of the city. I was amused to see one sign before a store, "*No Trust, Burnt Out.*"

There are two well-assorted bookstores. There are two tri-weekly newspapers published, one Whig and the other neutral (meaning Democrat.) But, what called my attention most was an academic school which has been recently opened, where I saw some forty boys and girls pursuing their studies. There is now an academy in every city in California. Returned Californians are welcomed on the arrival of every steamship, having their wives and children with them for a permanent residence in the golden State of their adoption. Of course, schools and churches will flourish wherever American women have their homes.

The money market is "tight" at Marysville, and it has been since the commencement of the wet season. In the "*Herald*," money is quoted at five per cent per month. Several business men told me that it was worth ten per cent per month, with good and ample security. The reason why business is so very dull at the present time is apparent. The gold dust that was taken out of the river beds during the last summer has all been sent to the Atlantic States, and miners have not yet brought in their dust from the dry diggings. In fact, we need a more stable population in California than we have had for the last two years. Instead of men coming here to make their "pile," and then slide home again to all parts of the world, we want steady and industrious men with their families, who will come here to make themselves homes on the Pacific coast, and who will expend their dust obtained in the mines in the improvement

of farms, villages and cities. California has been surfeited with gamblers, blacklegs and debauchees. Gambling has received its death blow here. Even in Marysville, gambling saloons do not now flourish well. The charms of music and wine and women cannot now get the money of the hard fisted miner.

As I was returning from my visit to Marysville, I was surprised to see the improvements of agriculture. From the city to the foothills of the mountains, a distance of over ten miles, every acre of ground is taken up, fenced, and cultivation has been commenced. On some of the farms, plows were running; it requiring two yoke of cattle or two spans of horses to break up the virgin sod. On other farms, men were sowing barley, wheat and other cereal grains. It would be novel for Michigan farmers to plow and sow in the month of January; but, it is the time here. During the last week, the weather has been clear and pleasant, and farmers have improved their time well. Barley is worth ten cents per pound, or \$5 per bushel, in the Marysville market. On this Bar, it is worth 20 cts. per pound. Week before last I saw a pair of common domestic fowls sold for \$10, and a person who had seven fowls and a brood of chickens refused \$50 for the lot. Eggs are worth \$6 per dozen. A yoke of oxen is worth \$200; a span of good horses from \$400 to \$600. Plows are worth \$40 each. Farming is better than mining.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



March 17, 1852,

Park's Bar,

Jan. 25th, 1852.

Friend DeLand,

Your *Citizen* of Dec. 3d, I received on Thursday last. I notice one article, "*Division of California*," which you will pardon me for answering. The southern part of the State, or that portion south of the latitude of San Francisco, is claimed by only a few land-holders. The farms are from one to eleven

leagues square in extent, or from 3,000 to 33,000 acres. The land is most excellent for cultivation producing the fruits, grains and vegetables of both temperate and torrid zones. The northern portion of the State is not cursed with land monopoly as much as the southern. The largest landholder only claims 150,000 acres of the best kind of arable soil. Quite a farm! The great Sacramento valley for 300 miles is mostly open to squatters, or settlers who squat on 160 acres, and hold their title by a sort of pre-emption. The valleys of the Feather and Yuba rivers are in the same condition as the Sacramento.

But, ever since the Americans have possessed California, there has existed a party who desire the introduction of Slavery into this State. As long as the mines are kept open as they are now, and not leased or sold by Congress, slave labor can never compete with free labor. The idea of working the mines by slave labor is therefore abandoned. But the attention of those who desire to live on the toil of the slave, is directed to the southern part of the State, where the climate of Italy prevails, and where the productions of the slave-holding States of the Union can be cultivated in the greatest profusion and excellence.

To make one slave State on the Pacific coast, a "*division of California*" is absolutely necessary. But, to divide the State on the latitude of the Golden Gate and San Joaquin, setting off the southern portion into an organized Territory, the northern part being still the State of California, would not answer the purpose. The Territory never could be brought into the Union as a slave State, without rekindling the fires of disunion, which we now smothered by the Compromise. Consequently, the plan is changed. It is now proposed to divide the State, call the southern part the State of California, when a convention could amend the Constitution; leaving the northern part to shift for itself, either as a Territory, or State, or nothing. Hence, all the hue and cry in the newspapers is raised about unequal taxation. Even Ex Governor McDougal, in his retiring Message, parades

a fine display of figures to show up this unequal taxation.

But, the whole argument is contained in a nutshell. If men are able to monopolize all the best land of California, claiming princely estates of from 3,000 to 150,000 acres each, they are able to pay their State taxes without grumbling. It is to be hoped, that the U.S. Land Commission, that is now in session at San Francisco, will thoroughly test the validity of those unwieldly land titles; make a clear sweep of the whole of them! giving the claimants only 160 acres each under pre-emption right! reserving the balance as government land to be surveyed and brought into market! and then we shall hear no more for years to come about the '*division of California*.' There is an "*area of freedom*" on the Pacific coast for half a dozen free States; but, not one solitary foot of soil for the cursed institution of slavery. Much as I despise the Abolitionists, and their treacherous third party movement, with consciences as pliable to Locofocoism as an old India-rubber shoe, still I believe that the people here or a majority of them want no slavery in California.

But, to change the subject, our Legislature met at Vallejo on the 1st Monday of this month. The two Houses organized, and counted the votes for Governor and Lieut. Governor, and other State officers. There are 29 counties. The returns were irregular returns, the following is the result:

FOR GOVERNOR

John Bigler, (Loco,)	15,614
P. B. Reading (Whig,)	15,244
Bigler's Majority,	370

FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Samuel Purdy, Loco,	16,465
D. P. Baldwin, Whig,	13,732
Purdy's Majority	2,733

Counting the nine disputed counties, the result is as follows:

FOR GOVERNOR

John Bigler, Loco,	23,174
P. B. Reading, Whig,	22,723
Bigler's Majority,	451

FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Samuel Purdy, Loco,	24,399
D. P. Baldwin, Whig,	20,959
Purdy's Majority,	3,440

Governor Bigler, in his Inaugural Address, in reference to agricultural lands, says that he "*will use every exertion to obtain the extension of the pre-emption and donation system over the State.*" In reference to the mineral lands, he says:— "*The mines should be left as free as the air we breath. At present, no proposition to lease or sell them should for a moment be entertained, because the inevitable tendencies of such policy would be the establishment of monopolies, which would serve, more than everything else besides, to paralyze the energies of the most enterprising and energetic class of men the world ever saw.*" So you see that our Loco Governor has adopted Whig sentiments in reference to our mineral lands. He has abandoned the Loco State platform of leasing or selling the mineral lands. I believe that, that is the way the Locos always keep in power by backing and filling on Whig principles, as their own becomes odious with the people.

At the last session of the Legislature, an Act was passed, changing the Capital from San Jose to Vallejo. Governor McDougal, with the State archives and State officers, moved from San Jose to Vallejo last spring, which latter is between San Francisco and Benicia, 6 miles from the latter place. On the first fall of rain, the then Governor moved back to San Jose, on account of the poorness of the buildings at the Capitol. The Legislature assembled at Vallejo; but, as there were no chairs, desks, rostrums, or accommodations in the State House; and

as most of the members were obliged to eat and sleep on board of a steamboat moored near the bank of the Straits! the Legislature suddenly adjourned from Vallejo to Sacramento. The citizens of the latter place made a splendid supper party and ball for the members! and also gave them the free use of their new City Hall. The State archives are still at San Jose, having been under a mandamus of a district Judge, for the purpose of bringing the Hon. Body back to San Jose. Where the Hon. the Legislature will bring up next, even the Governor of the third House has not announced. The pay for Members is still \$16 per day! the act reducing it to \$10 per day not having been signed by the Governor till three days after the last session. The Locos are for reducing *upward*. The election of a U.S. Senator is to come off soon.

As to winter weather, there has not been a drop of rain in three weeks. The roads are excellent, the skies are clear and cloudless. The days are warm. The nights are cold and frosty.
Yours,
T. S. Myrick



March 21, 1852

Park's Bar,

Jan. 26, 1852

Friend DeLand: President Fillmore's annual Message has been received and read here by men of both political parties, with great approbation. His recommendation to Congress for the establishment of a U.S. Mint at San Francisco, and for the keeping of the mineral lands open to all citizens as they are now, finds general favor with the public sentiments of the people of California. So great is the necessity for a Mint here, and so much is the want of gold coin for circulation, that the merchants of San Francisco have petitioned Messrs. Moffatt & Co. U.S. Assayers, to issue \$300,000 in private coinage of the denomination of \$5, \$10, and \$20. Messrs. Wass, Molitor & Co., have commenced coining \$5 gold pieces. The \$50 gold pieces, or "slugs," are inconvenient for making small change; and they

are the only coinage which Messrs. Moffat & Co. are authorized by Government to issue. An attempt was recently made by a firm of San Francisco, to put paper money in circulation; but nobody would take the worthless "rags." A Mint ought to be established by Congress immediately, for the benefit of all classes of citizens, but more especially miners.

When the Indian war commenced in the southern part of the State, a captured Indian chief made a statement that Senor Estadillo and Don Jose Joaquin Ortega, two of the oldest and most respectable citizens of San Diego, were both guilty of conspiring with him, to bring on a general Indian war for the extermination of all Americans in the Southern part of the State. The statement was published by the San Diego Herald; and it was generally believed that the old Californians were the instigators of the war. But such is not the fact. The Indian chief wished to screen himself by implicating others. A court martial has exonerated the Spaniards; and condemned six captured Indian chiefs to be shot; which sentence has been carried into execution. The Indians had murdered eight Americans. It is to be hoped the war is now over. The U.S. Commissioner has made treaties with several tribes, and assigned to them certain land reservations. The volunteers from San Francisco to San Diego have all returned. One American was caught among the Indians, and executed.

Col. J. C. Fremont, late U. S. Senator from California, claims a large tract of land on the Mariposas river, a branch of the San Joaquin, of several leagues in extent. He derives his title from a decree made in February, 1844, by Micheltorrena, Governor of California, who pretended to act with absolute powers, he declaring said property to rest in Don Juan B. Alvarado in consideration of past public services. Col. Fremont made his purchase of Alvarado, before the gold mines were discovered. Besides the whole valley of the Mariposas, which has excellent agricultural land, he claims into the mountains on that stream, where several valuable quartz gold mines have

been discovered. It is also understood that he has an agent in Europe, selling claims or shares in quartz-mines. Col. Fremont has appeared by attorney before the U. S. Commissioners, to establish his enormously large claim. If he succeeds in accomplishing it, he will be truly a second John Jacob Astor in wealth. He will count his "pile" by millions of dollars, instead of by thousands. It seems that while he was in Government employ, he succeeded wonderfully in making his own fortune. There is great indignation against Col. Fremont among miners on the Mariposas river. Will the Government allow him to hold miles and miles of rich mineral lands? This is the kind of monopoly that would exist if our mineral lands were ordered by Congress to be either granted or sold. Col. Fremont ought to have, only as much mineral land as miners agree among themselves, that one man may hold and work.

The Golden Gate, Isthmus and North American steamships have just arrived at San Francisco from Panama, crowded with Passengers, among whom are many ladies and children. The news is that a great many emigrants are at Panama, waiting a chance to come up. A great many have died on the way up of Panama fever. Newcomers are rushing into California and hurrying up to the mines, in search of "the diggings."

Yours,

T. S. Myrick.



April 7, 1852.

Park's Bar,

Feb. 1st, 1852.

Friend DeLand: Occasionally a letter, which has been written home by some disappointed gold-seeker, comes back here in a newspaper, disparaging California in every respect, but particularly in reference to its agricultural facilities. In other articles, I have partially described one or two valleys below the latitude of San Francisco, and given you facts and figures, concerning the first attempts at cultivating the soil; but, in this communication, I propose to describe to you the great

Sacramento valley, which is the largest and most important of the whole State, because it is so extensive in its area, and has such close proximity to the mines.

The Sacramento valley is bounded on the north by the Shasta mountains, on the east by the Sierra Nevada, on the south by the San Joaquin valley. It is over 400 miles in length, from north to south, and on an average, about fifty miles from east to west. The Sacramento River courses through its whole extent, from north to south. The river is navigable for small steamboats from its confluence with the San Joaquin, to within fifty miles of the northern bounds of the valley, during the whole of the rainy season, and also during most of the dry season. The Sacramento is a deep and noble river, its waters moving on towards the waters of the Pacific in slow and stately grandeur. Its banks are uniformly from 10 to 20 feet in height, in accordance as it is high or low water, and covered with a forest of trees. The banks are abrupt, except where bars slope down to the water's edge, at distances of a few miles.

From the banks of the river to the mountains, either on the east or west side, the valley spreads out into a plain, which is so perfectly level that objects can be seen to the fullest extent of the visual horizon. The surface is varied by alternate stretches of prairie and oak openings. The soil is a kind of black loam, which is entirely alluvial and of great depth. It produces everywhere a spontaneous growth of wild oats, clover, and grass; affording abundance of feed for wild cattle, elk, antelope and deer. The California oak is about as tall as the burr oaks of Michigan, but much thicker and having wide-spreading branches. The openings are almost entirely destitute of underbrush, appearing like immense fields of grain or meadow land in old orcharding. I have traveled up the valley 130 miles above Sacramento City, and I have nowhere seen any better land for farming than can be found in this valley. Whenever it is surveyed and brought into market, by the U. S. Government, it will be settled by a dense population, for there is no part of

the valley, but what is easy of access to a market in the mines of the Shasta and Sierra Nevada mountains, or in the cities near the mouth of the Sacramento river. But the best feature for its speedy settlement is the fact, that it is not covered by those enormous land claims, which curse the whole southern part of the State; hence actual settlers, who take up a pre-emption of 160 acres each, can readily find a home of comfort and opulence. In conclusion, I subjoin a communication from the San Francisco *Herald*, from a gentleman who lately went to the upper valley country, on the Jenny Lind steamer, for the purpose of visiting the country.

Yours,

Thomas S. Myrick

“As one of the parties, we have conceived a most enthusiastic idea of the beauty and fertility of the valley of the upper Sacramento. The river follows the Coast Range during the whole trip up, being distant from it, on an average 20 or 25 miles, and being of a somewhat greater distance from the Sierra Nevada Range. The banks of the river become higher, as one leaves Sacramento city, insuring against inundations, but never becoming precipitous. This vast plain between the two mountain ranges, presents as beautiful a body of land as the eye of man ever rested upon. Already are the banks of the river, on either side, dotted with the ranches of settlers, but millions of acres are yet untouched, furnishing land sufficient in quality and quantity to make California almost as distinguished for agriculture as for mineral resources. It is a most mistaken idea, that the cultivable land of the State, is confined to the few Southern valleys of which we hear so much. This immense valley of the Sacramento is one of the richest agricultural regions in the world. After leaving Sacramento city, we first came to the towns of Fremont and Vernon, at the mouth of Feather river. They seem almost deserted, Marysville having taken their anticipated trade. We next came to the new town of Colusi on the Sacramento, about half-way between Tehama

and Sacramento City. Colusi contains from 15 to 20 houses and looks new, fresh and pleasant. We saw the sites of a number of defunct cities on the river, not having now a house or store to tell where they once stood. Monroeville is situated on the left bank of the river, about 60 or 70 miles above Sacramento—it consists of one house and a very good one it is too, the property of a Mr. Monroe. It is the county seat of Colusi county.

All agree that there must be some point on the Sacramento, above Sacramento, above Sacramento City, to supply the growing wants of the agricultural community, but more especially to supply the growing wants of the miners of the Shasta region. This mining country is becoming more and more popular, and we are assured that it has now a mining population of many thousands, none of whom, who work, average less than 5 dollars a day.

The town of Tehama is distant fifty miles from Shasta City, the center of this great mining region, and is the point through which the road from the whole lower country passes to the mines. It is also the crossing and trading place of the upper Feather river and Yuba mines.

We had a delightful trip up and down, and became fully satisfied that the river is navigable at all seasons throughout the entire route. The Jenny Lind, Camanche and Marysville steamers are now making regular trips on the route, and find all they can do in carrying freight and passengers.”



April 14, 1852.

Park's Bar,

Feb. 8, 1852

Friend DeLand: The U. S. Land Commission is in session at San Francisco. The action of that body is looked upon with the greatest interest and anxiety throughout the State. If I understand the Mexican colonization laws, it is necessary to have all grants of land made by Governors of California, confirmed by the Mexican Congress. All titles not confirmed before the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, become void and revert to

the United States. Commodore Robert F. Stockton, by attorney, has presented his claim to the rancho Potrero de Santa Clara, under a grant made by Governor Micheltorrena in 1844. Hon. John C. Fremont has presented his claim to the rancho Las Mariposas, by grant from the same Governor; and Emlaus Voss contests his claim. Capt. W. G. Dana, of San Luis Obispo, has presented his claim to the rancho de Nipoma, under a grant made by Governor Alvarado, in 1837. Archibald A. Ritchie and Paul S. Forbes, have presented their claim to the rancho de Guenoc, in Sonoma valley, containing six leagues, or 18,000 acres, under a grant made by Governor Pio Pico, in 1845. Joel S. Pollock, Seline Franklin and Edward Franklin, claim the Island of Yurba Buena, in the bay of San Francisco, containing several thousand acres, under a grant from Governor Alvarado. Jose de la Guerra de Noriega claims the rancho de San Julian, in Santa Barbara county, embracing six leagues, or 18,000 acres, under a grant from Governor Alvarado in 1837. I shall send you an account of the action of the Commission on each claim, so that your readers may know somewhat of the land monopoly of California. It has cost one claimant \$6,000 to have his claim surveyed. Another claimant wanted six leagues, or 18,000 acres, in the Sacramento valley; but, finding it rather expensive to have his land surveyed, he claimed only two leagues, or 6,000 acres, probably thinking that would do for a small farm!

On the 30th of January, the Legislature of California elected Col. John B. Weller, of Ohio memory, a Senator in the U. S. Senate for 6 years from the 4th of March, 1851. The vote was 71 for John B. Weller, Loco, and 17 for P. B. Readings, Whig. Nobody thought of returning Hon. John C. Fremont, who is decidedly unpopular with his own party. Col. Fremont has commenced a libel suit against the editors of the Stockton Journal on account of their exposing an alleged swindling scheme in quartz mining by agents of the Colonel in Europe. The damages are only laid at \$1,000,000. It is said that he has made over \$1,000,000 by his speculation.

The news has come here from Salt Lake City, that all of the U. S. officers of the Utah Territory, not Mormons, have left for home!—that the Mormons made an attempt to seize \$24,000 belonging to the U. S. Government; that Governor Young had thrown off all allegiance to the Government; that the Mormons had published a Declaration of Independence; and that they were actively fortifying themselves against an expected attack of Uncle Sam's troops. If all this news is true, which came over-land, there will be some lively employment for the army. The Mormons are probably 20,000 strong in Salt Lake valley. They have a colony of 500 families in the valley of San Bernardino, in the southern part of California; where they have 1,800 acres of land under cultivation. They are about founding another colony between the Gila and Colorado rivers.

In reference to mining, I will give you some news. On Monday last, I went up the Yuba to Rose's Bar, four miles above this Bar. One bank claim was bought by a party of men last October for \$100. By digging down some 20 feet, and keeping a pump in operation day and night, to keep out the water from the river, some very rich dirt was taken out. They then sold the claim to a third party for \$6,000. The last party have paid for their claim, and made something besides. About \$25,000 have been taken out of the claim up to this time, which cannot now be bought for less than \$5,000. This discovery produced such an excitement on the Bar, that every claim of 30 feet was taken up immediately, although they have all been dug over on the surface several times. When the river is turned into the race next summer, those bank claimants will have "a right smart chance of making their pile." Before this discovery, it was supposed by every miner on the Bar, that the bank diggins were entirely exhausted.

From Rose's Bar, I went to Sucker Flat, which is two miles south of that Bar, and at the head of several ravines, which find their way down into the Yuba. Here I found two large boarding houses in full operation, and quite a village of tents, besides,

the whole Flat is taken up by 600 claims 100 by 60 feet in extent. The claims are held at from \$100 to \$1,000 each. I prospected a dozen pans of dirt taken from the surface indiscriminately, and found from one to five cents in each pan. I was told that on bed rock some of the claims prospect as high as 37½ cents to a pan of dirt. For washing the gold, sluices are used. A sluice is made by taking three rough boards a foot wide, which are nailed together, so that there shall be a bottom and sides, while the upper part is open. From 3 to 5 lengths are joined by placing the end of the first inside of the second, and so on with the third and fourth to the last. Riffles are nailed to the inside bottom of each section, to prevent the gold from floating off with the dirt. A stream of water is let into the first division, which runs through the whole. Men with picks and shovels are stationed on each side of the sluice, digging and throwing in dirt while one man with a fork or rake stirs up the dirt and throws out the stones as they are washed. This is called sluicing. Where dirt pays one cent to a pan, sluicing will pay from \$10 to \$16 per man per day. One company has dug a ditch, bringing water to Sucker Flat, a distance of 5 miles. A second company has a ditch almost completed, bringing water 9 miles. A third company has commenced another ditch. The price is \$12 per day for one sluice by the water company. Wages are \$5 per man, per day. There are several ravines in the vicinity of Sucker Flat, that will afford good diggings, where man can make rather more than wages. A family by the name of Morris, from Jackson county, Michigan, is keeping one of the boarding houses on Sucker Flat. Board is \$10 per week.

A splendid bridge is nearly completed across the Yuba at this Bar. It is 500 feet long. It has cost \$12,000. It is made of California pines. Its stock is owned by a company. It is securely built above the highest high-water mark. A line of daily four horse coaches runs from Marysville to this Bar, 20 miles, and hence to Nevada City, 30 miles. The fare from here to Marysville is only \$5, and from here to Nevada City only \$6. I hear

that Friend H. C. Hodge has returned to Nevada from his visit to Michigan, and that the County Treasurer of Nevada is in good health. It is impossible for young men to return east, and do business after the old plodding style, where copper coin is in circulation.

The enclosed "Rhapsody" is from the Marysville *Herald*, of Feb. 7th. Is it not beautiful! I also send some California 'items' from late papers. Your "*Citizen*" is quite a prize to me here in this far off land.

Yours,

Thomas S. Myrick.



April 21, 1852.

Park's Bar,

Feb. 14, 1852.

Friend DeLand, The steamer Oregon arrived at San Francisco on the 11th inst., 14 days from Panama, bringing over 500 passengers, of whom 38 are females and 28 children. About a dozen of the Oregon's passengers arrived on this Bar last night, full of excitement and wonderment at the gold mines. They had little money; and when they were charged 75 cents for supper, 75 cents for breakfast and 50 cents for sleeping on their own blankets in a bunk, their eyes stuck out some at the cheapest prices in the mines. It is really amusing to see new comers perform, when they get a sight at the real elephant. Finding that they could get no work on this Bar at even \$5 a day, they all shouldered their blankets, and started off up the Yuba this morning in search of the diggings. They were advised to go to Sucker Flat for a beginning.

The news from the Atlantic States, is, that the people there are as crazy as ever about the gold mines of California. The people there seem to think that gold here can readily be found along the banks of the river, and all that is necessary to be done to secure it is simply to pick it up from the top of the ground. Such greenhorns generally learn something about gold digging, after they have been in the mines less than one year.

It is true, that there is gold enough here; but, then, it requires hard and patient toil to get it. Men who come here now must make up their minds to be content with \$5 a day; and then, if they can luckily make \$20 a day, they will be agreeably disappointed. There are 200 men on this Bar, and they are not making on an average more than \$5 a day. A year ago, \$10 a day could be obtained; and two years ago, \$20 could be made as easily as \$5 can now. The banks of the Yuba have been dug over and over again; but there are numerous streams and branches that remain yet to be prospected.

When the Oregon left Panama, there were 600 passengers who had taken passage on four sailing vessels; and there were 1000 waiting for the next steamer. The Panama papers complain of the want of bread and pork, to feed the unusual emigration. Last week the steamer Panama arrived at San Francisco with 484 passengers. The propellers McKim and Monumental City left Panama full of passengers; but the McKim put into San Diego for supplies on the 28th ult. and the Monumental City ran into Acapulco. The McKim was out some 60 days, and the passengers were allowed one sea biscuit a day. Several passengers of those two propellers were brought up by the Oregon. Steerage tickets were selling at Panama at \$200 and \$300 each. There were 8 deaths on board of the McKim. Emigrants for California ought by all means to buy through tickets at New York or New Orleans, and thus save themselves from great imposition. The schooner B. S. Allen arrived at San Francisco last week from Panama, with 67 passengers, 6 being females. Eight passengers died on the way up, of whom one was Benjamin Wingham of Michigan, aged 43 years. The vessel was 40 days on the passage. The common disease was the Panama fever.

The great rush of passengers over the Isthmus and the frightful mortality on board of vessels from Panama to San Francisco, and caused by perfect carelessness. In passing from the temperate to the torrid zone, it is absolutely necessary for

men to be extremely careful of their diet and habits. Those who are astonished to see oranges, cocoanuts, pine-apples and other fruits growing in perfect luxuriance, and who eat to repletion of every thing within their reach, must get the Panama fever. Those who expose themselves to the rain, hot sun, and heavy dew, which alternate so rapidly, must certainly have the Panama fever. But above all, those who never bathe or wash their persons all over, but who are dirty, gluttonous and half or two-thirds drunk all of the time, ought by all means to die of the Panama fever, for it would be \$500 better to each one of them than to come to California with such habits. But, those who leave New York or New Orleans with through steamer tickets, and travel with some little attention to change of climate, may have that pleasure and enjoyment which only the intelligent traveler knows how to appreciate. I really believe that in 9 cases out of 10, the deaths resulting from Panama fever are caused by perfect carelessness, and might have been avoided by the use of a little common sense and intelligence.

Your readers can hardly appreciate the fine climate of a winter in California. Since I last wrote to you, there has been one gentle shower of rain, and that is all for several weeks. The sky is perfectly clear, the air warm and balmy, and the atmosphere pure and serene. All kinds of vegetation are making rapid strides. The leaves of the oak and other trees are busting from the bud. The hills and valleys are covered with a velvet lawn of wild grass. The butter-cup and wild cucumber are in full blossom. The air is full of the fragrance of early wild flowers. I wish that I could send a California wild flower to each one of your lady readers, who understands botany, for a place in her herbarium in the order that each flower appears to deck the bosom of nature from the present time till the close of the season. The farmer and the gardener are busily engaged in cultivating the soil. But the gold digger in the ravine or the gulch complains of the want of rain, to wash out his rich ore from the virgin soil.

Gold digging is dull enough just now. There is too much water in the rivers to work there. The banks of the rivers above high water are mostly worked out, so that diggings are poor there. There is not water enough in the ravines to work there. The miner wants more rain and more water. Large companies of miners, tired of waiting for more rain, are digging ditches of miles in length, in which to bring water from large streams to rich diggings which are remote from the rivers. As a consequence of the little gold digging just now, all kinds of business are very dull in the cities below. The roads are dry and traveling is good. Every business man is looking forward anxiously for the return of the dry season, which is the harvest time of the miner. Grain is high, on account of the demand for seed by farmers. Barley is 14 cents per pound at Marysville, or \$5.60 per bushel, at the wholesale price. Flour is \$7.50 per 100 lbs.

Yours truly,
T. S. Myrick.



May 5, 1852.
Friend DeLand,

Park's Bar.

March 1, 1852.

In a late letter to you, I stated that there was an attempt being made by certain slavery propagandists on the Pacific side of the Union, to divide the state of California for the purpose of introducing Negro slavery. Such now appears to be the undeniable fact. The efforts of a certain clique, who have heretofore worked in secret, are now being brought to light. An attempt has been made to get up a convention in the southern part of the State, to remonstrate against a pretended plea of unequal taxation, on the ground that the agricultural and mineral portions ought to be separated, which has been an entire failure. Now, these same lovers of change are lobbying with our Legislature, to induce that body to call a State Convention for the revision of the Constitution itself, by getting a

law passed for the assembling of a Convention, without the vote of the people.

But, their efforts are now within the knowledge of the people. In all our newspapers, the question is now, "Shall the State be divided?" The *Alta California* of San Francisco, *San Francisco Pacific*, *Marysville Herald*, and *Express*, *Nevada Journal*, *Stockton Republican*, and *Sacramento Union*, all leading newspapers, are out in repeated Editorials against this nefarious scheme. They oppose the agitation of the slavery question on the Pacific coast. They oppose every move, tending to introduce Negro slavery into California.

If the people of the State are ever called upon to vote upon this question, our present Constitution will be sustained by an overwhelming majority. The slavery men are in such an unenviable minority, that they can do nothing by openhanded means. Unfortunately, our Legislature is made up of men, who, instead of legislating for the interests of the State, insist upon running tilts upon different political hobbies, in search of some imaginary legacy of political fame. Our first Legislature was called emphatically "the Legislature of a thousand drinks." The second was no better; and the third Legislature is trying hard to outdo both the others. There is one check upon them, which is the publication of their doings in the newspapers. What course our Legislature will pursue, in reference to a State Convention, remains yet to be seen.

A bill has passed the Assembly, "respecting fugitives from labor and slaves brought to this State prior to her admission into the Union," which in some of its provisions is similar to the Fugitive Slave Law of Congress, and is therefore in-operative while the Congressional Law is in force; but there is one section making slaves of those Negroes who were formerly slaves in other States, and who were brought here as slaves by their masters, to dig in the gold mines for their benefit. Our Constitution says that—"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crimes shall ever be tolerated in

this State." Before the bill can become a law, it must take its chances in the Senate, and then over-ride the veto of the Governor.

Recently, Governor Bigler transmitted a special Message to the Legislature, stating that the civil debt of California was \$796,963.95, and the war debt \$1,445,375.79; making the total State debt to be \$2,242,339.74. This statement produced an immediately disastrous effect upon the credit of the State. At the instance of Ex-Governor McDougal, a special committee has been appointed by the Senate, to confer with the paymasters of the several corps engaged against the Indians, and it has been ascertained that the war debt made by five expeditions is only \$766,000, thus reducing by a dash of the pen, the State debt over \$700,000. The Locos are quarreling over this matter among themselves.

In accordance with a resolution of the Senate passed Jan. 20th, 1852, the State Comptroller has made a special report, by which some of the affairs of our new State for the year 1851 are exhibited as follows:

No. of acres of land assessed	7,658,238
Value of lands and improvements,	\$ 7,694,813
Value of lots and improvements,	19,026,846
Value of personal property	19,323,345
Total value of property	46,276,702
State taxes on same 50 cents \$100	231,070
Int. tax on do 15 cents on \$100	69,219
Poll tax assessed	26,907
State tax on billards and ten-pins	2,260
State taxes of counties	333,138

The returns from three counties not included above will increase the taxable property of the State to \$50,000,000. Will not this statement answer for the prosperity of the 31st State?

On the 1st of Feb. the Steamer General Warren was lost off the Columbia river, and 42 lives were lost out of 52 persons on board. About \$60,000 worth of freight was lost also, consist-

ing of grain, hogs, poultry, lumber. The Warren was an old boat, and entirely unseaworthy.

The Sonora Herald says that two weeks ago a man by the name of John Rabey was walking near that town, and discovered some gold bearing quartz just above the ground, which he pulled up and found it to weigh 96 ounces and to be worth \$1000. Four other lumps were also found, which with the first were worth \$3,500. Another man found a lump containing 25 ounces of gold. A Negro found a lump weighing 16 ounces. Pretty good surface diggings! The Stockton Republican and the Jackson Sentinel complain of the want of rain in the Southern mines. The miners have any quantity of dirt for washing thrown up, but there is no rain. They are now turning their attention to the cutting of ditches for miles in extent, to supply ravines, flats and gulches with water. A company has also been formed to dig a large ditch, for the purpose of irrigating the agricultural lands in the vicinity of Stockton, with water from the Stanislaus river. In that region there is a great mania for farming. If the land is irrigated, garden vegetables for the supply of the city can be raised throughout the year.

Another Territory is wanted. The residents of Carson Valley have united in a petition to Congress, for the establishment of a Territorial Government, to embrace the valleys of Carson, Humbolt, Truckee, and Walker. The document is to be forwarded to Washington immediately. If Congress should grant the prayer of petitioners, there would be an organized Territory between Utah and California which might soon be knocking at the doors of Congress for admission into the Union as a State! How this America of ours does widen!

The San Francisco newspapers are filled with accounts of the most daring robberies, which have been perpetrated there during a few weeks past. The Alta calls upon the authorities to stir themselves, or else a crisis will again arise for a re-organization of the Vigilance Committee. That Committee can scour the Augean stables of rascals with a rush! The author-

ities cannot catch midnight plunderers, but the Committee found them mighty easy, and hung them in a hurry.

The express man has just come to this Bar today with the New York Tribune of Jan. 24th, only 36 days from New York! He says that the steamer Golden Gate has arrived at San Francisco with 1200 passengers. And still they come!

Yours truly,
T. S. Myrick.



May 19, 1852

Park's Bar, Yuba Co.

March 15th, 1852

Friend DeLand: Since my last letter to you there has been another change in our California weather. During January and February, the climate here was most delightful and spring-like. Farmers were plowing and sowing, Miners complained of the want of rain. But, during the first week in March, the rain came in torrents. The mountain ravines and gulches became full of water. The Yuba river rose about twenty feet in one day; and it continued to rise till it was two feet higher than the high water mark of 1849-50. The Park's Bar bridge, which has been completed only one day, at a cost of \$15,000 by a company, was swept away a few hours after the stage-coach filled with passengers had crossed. Immense quantities of trees, logs, lumber and mining machines were swept down the river by the flood from the mountains. At the confluence of the Yuba and Feather rivers, the water was backed up all over the plain about Marysville. About one half of the city itself was inundated on the 7th inst. The plaza was under water, so that goods and passengers were taken from the second story windows of stores and houses, by boats. Several one-story buildings were afloat around the city. Forty-two business firms were suddenly driven out of their buildings by the flood, to the high ground east of the plaza. Several brick stores, filled with goods in the second stories, caved in destroying their contents. Families living in houses on the flat west of the plaza, barely had time to leave before

the rush of the flood. The Sheriff says that he tied up his house to a tree, but his documents were exposed to a good soaking. Steamboats navigated the streets of the west part of the city. Among the business men drowned out, I notice the firm of Ford, Lathrop & Co.

The whole plain between Marysville and Sacramento city, along the Feather and Sacramento rivers, was also inundated, destroying nearly all the farms on those rivers, filling up ditch fences, carrying away horses and cattle, swamping houses, and damaging every thing generally. The levee around the city of Sacramento was swept away in many places, and more than half of the city was covered with water from five to twenty feet deep. Large amounts of merchandise was destroyed, before the owners could place it on board, of vessels at the levee. No human lives were lost, but the rats with which that city is infested came to their death by drowning, according to the report of the city coroner. On Tuesday, the 9th instant, the water had subsided so that foot passengers were perambulating the city. Only a few lives were lost on the Yuba. The body of one man was found in the top of a tree, between Park's Bar and Marysville, after the flood had abated. The rain still continues at short intervals. If it will only stop now, we do not intend to read the prayer for rain again during the whole year. The bridges are gone every where. The roads are well-nigh impassible. The cold rain pours down. This is a California winter. During the last two weeks, I have made out to work three whole days, and made \$25 in all. But, we do not have so bad a winter here after all. Our cloth houses are comfortable, and today a fire in the stove is unnecessary. The papers say that you have had a tremendous winter at the East. This morning I gathered seven varieties of wild flowers to send to some of my friends in Michigan.

On the night of the 20th of February, the principal part of Downieville, on the upper Yuba, was laid in ashes by a destructive fire. The loss was over \$750,000. In one day after,

new buildings were erected, and in one week after, mule trains from Marysville had supplied the town with provisions and goods, and business went on as though nothing had happened. There is life and enterprise in California, that cannot be found no where else in the wide world. Men do more business here in one day than they can in Michigan in one month. This is a fast country. Even Marysville and Sacramento have recovered from the recent flood, and nobody talks about that accident any longer. Those cities are now above water, and business is done as usual. If any calamity happens to a dozen men here, a dozen other men immediately step into their places, and no change or vacuum is perceptible. Neither fire nor flood can hinder the everlasting perserverance for gold. If a man is dead broke here, one day, perhaps on the next day he is making his pile. This is the country for a poor man, if he will only work; and work he must or starve; for a lazy man cannot exist here long, because stomach supplies cost at least a trifle!

I will give you a little insight into California life, by relating an anecdote. There are two Justices on this Bar elected by the people. One of them holds court in a ten pin alley. Week before last, he had an important case on trial before him, relating to the possession of a river claim located by two companies. A large number of witnesses were in attendance from other Bars. After one day had been passed in empaneling a disinterested Jury, the trial went on day and evening for a week. Some four or five lawyers were employed, and much interest was manifested by both parties. I visited court room several times, to witness the progress of the trial. The Court, Jury, lawyers and witnesses occupied one side of the room. On the opposite side, two ten-pin alleys were constantly used by players. Between the court and the alleys, was a bar of choice liquors, where a crowd was constantly calling for milk punch, brandy straight, brandy toady, or some other drink. In another part of the room still, there was a table where parties were playing euchre, seven-up or some other game. From the court

to the boys setting up pins, every body was busy. A glass of punch did not seem to affect the dignity of the Court, and the lawyers found it indispensable before and after summing up. Every three ten-strikes in succession called on Champaigne for the whole house. Thus the trial progressed to its close. Notwithstanding the universal practises of drinking and gambling, law and order are as much respected in the mines of California as any where else in the United States. Whenever Americans are located, there you find self-government and law and order. There is less crime than in the older States, because criminals here are punished with a rigorous hand. A thief is hung on the tree nearest to where he is caught. If one man calls another a liar, the revolver punishes the insult. Men respect the rights of others, and treat each other more civil and gentlemanly than in some older parts of the Union. By the way, Sunday is the miners' holyday. Yesterday there was a circus performance in the afternoon and evening, and most of the ladies and gentlemen attended. Next Sunday there will be preaching. How the newcomers are flocking in! It is said that there are six thousand persons on the Isthmus, awaiting passage. Four steamships leave San Francisco this week to bring them up.

Yours truly,
T. S. Myrick.



June 2, 1852.

Park's Bar, Yuba Co.,

April 11, 1852.

Friend DeLand: The U.S. Land Commission is still in session at San Francisco. About 170 petitions of land claimants have been presented to and filed by the Board. No further action has been had on them yet, excepting an order for a few initiatory surveys.

The slavery propagandists have not succeeded in their action for a division of the State. A Bill calling a convention of the people, to amend the Constitution, was passed through the Assembly, but was so efficiently opposed by the whole press

throughout the State, that it was put at rest in the Senate. It is to be hoped that that will be the end of the slavery question in California. It is understood here, that the great Compromise measures have quieted the agitation between the North and South, and any attempt to fasten slavery upon any part of California will rekindle an excitement which cannot be easily allayed. Here there is no sympathy, either with the Abolitionists of the North, or with the secessionists of the South. Both are treated as fanatics.

A bill has passed the Assembly, "to enforce contracts for labor." It is called out of the Legislature the Coolie bill. The object of the Bill is to permit or allow monopolists of agricultural and mineral lands to send to China and other countries, and make contracts with laborers at small wages for a term of years, and then hold said laborers to said contract after their importation here, under a heavy fine and imprisonment. Most of the newspaper press has attacked the Coolie Bill with such effect, that it has been allowed to sleep in the Senate. There are some who came to California poor, but who are now capitalists, having made their "pile," who now want capital to have an undue influence over labor. On the Atlantic slope, capital has labor under its iron will; but, on the Pacific, labor has somewhat of a show. The high price of labor seriously retards the exactions of capital. It is to be hoped that the Loco Legislature of California will not pass the Coolie bill, thus showing to the whole Union that Democracy with them is only a name. The old Californians, under Mexican law, made servants of the Digger Indians, and these new upstart capitalists would like to make servants of the whole world; forgetting that there are numerous Americans all over the mines, who will not use the pick and shovel by the side of a slave anyhow. There are too many Ex-Governor Boggs in the California Legislature.

The great freshet of the 1st of March did considerable injury throughout the mining districts and in the valleys of the San Joaquin and Sacramento. Bridges were universally swept

away; farms on low bottom lands were inundated; and gold-bearing dirt thrown up in ravines and gulches was washed away. But the rains benefited all classes of people more than they injure a few. During the month of March, thousands of ravines were worked where there was a scarcity of water before the freshet. The immense shipment of gold dust from San Francisco on the 1st of April, shows the effect of the rain.

It is still too early by one or two months for mining in the beds of the rivers. The mountains are covered with snow, which is constantly melting, thus keeping up the waters of the rivers. Miners are at work in ravine and bank diggings. I hear of some claims that are paying largely. One bank claim changed hands on this Bar some three weeks since for \$150. It was supposed to be entirely worked out; but, the new purchasers sunk a hole in the high bank about 30 feet deep, and found a large crevice that paid \$5 to the pan. The claim is now yielding \$200 per day over all expenses. The claim is now held at \$4000. The goddess of Fortune is a fickle jade.

It is perfectly astonishing how fast emigration is pouring into California! The Editor of the Tribune says that "all the world is going to California," and I verily believe it. Every steamship and sail vessel from Panama comes into San Francisco loaded to the very water's edge with humanity in every shape after gold! And here they come the gold seekers panting and puffing up the banks of the Yuba, like small steamboats in their way, loaded down with their blankets, tin cups, frying-pans, picks and shovels enquiring "how far is it to the mines?" Bah! All we can say is, stay the tide of emigration. Most seriously we believe that the Eureka State is destined to be one of the first in the Union; and we want to see it settled permanently with a thriving portion of our own countrymen and country women. But, for heaven's sake tell some of the Eastern folks to stay at home, till the thousands by the Isthmus, Tehuantepec, "across the plains," and "away round the Horn," can have a chance to dig a little gold to keep them from absolute

want and starvation. Perhaps you think that in the land of gold there is no chance for poverty; but within the last month, I have seen stout-looking young men begging their bread and lodging. A new company needs at least \$50 or \$100 to commence mining operations; but, most of the emigration land without \$5 to their name.

The Governor has sent a special Message to the Legislature, asking that Body to make an appropriation of \$15,000, for the relief of the overland emigration that will very soon come pouring over the Sierra Nevada upon us like an avalanche. Beside the multitude of Americans that are daily arriving, immense delegations are coming from France, Chile, and China. The newspapers are calling for public meetings, to aid in giving relief to the needy emigration. Men who have no money cannot engage here in agriculture or in mining in river claims. They must work by the day. Even now men are anxious to work for \$3 and \$4 per day. There is gold enough to California, but men must have bread and pork while they dig. There will soon be no necessity for capitalists to urge the passage of the Coolie bill, for the purpose of bringing labor down to Eastern prices.

Quartz mining must soon engage the attention of gold diggers. Numerous companies have already been organized, and locations made and prospected. But, there is such a deficiency in the construction of machinery, that there are only a few quartz claims that are paying. During the last week, the Sutter Quartz Mining Company at Forbestown, near Feather river commenced operations, with machinery of forty-five horse power made at the foundry of Messrs. Donahue, of San Francisco. The machine was worked one day, and out of 20 tons of quartz, 4-1/8 cents per pound were realized, or over \$1,500. About six miles from this Bar, at a small place called Quartzville, there is a man who has a family, of whom two are boys of 14 and 16 years of age. The boys make from \$7 to \$8 each per day by pounding up quartz in a large hand mortar.

One year ago the family was poor enough; but now they all have some \$5000. There are quartz companies all over the gold region, making preparations to extract gold from quartz rock.
Yours Truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



June 23, 1852.

Park's Bar, Yuba Co.,

May 9th, 1852.

Friend DeLand: The Legislature of California adjourned on the 4th instant, having passed 170 acts and 28 joint Resolutions, which were approved by the Governor. The famous "Coolie Bill," although passed by the Assembly, was lost in the Senate. Thanks to the Senate! One of the joint Resolutions approved of the Compromise Measures of the last Congress; and another throws open the swamp (tule) lands to speculation. Acts were passed to authorize married women to transact business in their own names as sole traders; to reclaim fugitives from labor, and slaves brought into this State before her admission into the Union; to provide for the erection of a State Prison; to dispose of the 500,000 acres of land granted to the State by Congress; to authorize the Governor to procure and forward a block of California marble to the Washington Monument Society; to establish a system of common schools; to provide for the inspection of flour; to provide for the construction of telegraph lines in the State; and to protect and define the liabilities and privileges of foreigners, taxing them \$2 per month for working in the mines. Some of these Acts are very good and acceptable to the people; but there are other Acts highly detrimental to the interest of the State. The Legislature was three Locos to one Whig; and still the San Francisco Herald (Loco) holds the following language on the Close of the Session:

"Our readers will find in another column a sketch of the closing scenes of the California Legislature. The only comment we can make upon them is that they are in every respect worthy

of the body which enacted them. We congratulate the public on the termination of the session; for a more unprofitable one never took place in the annals of any State in the Union. But for the patriotism of a few honorable and high minded members, the session would have been even less profitable and more pernicious than it has been. We intend at our leisure to review the little that has been done, and to point out all that was omitted to be done. We would do it today, but more important matter occupies our columns."

It is estimated that over 10,000 Chinese are on their way to California. About 5,000 of them have already arrived at San Francisco, and scattered themselves through the mines. These Chinese are of the poorest and most servile class of their nation. They are sent here by speculators, to dig the gold from our mines to fill the coffers of those who send them. But, they are of no advantage here whatever. Their habits, manners and customs prevent their becoming American citizens. Our forms of law and government are not binding on them. They go in clans of from 50 to 500, and depend on their own traders for their supplies. Their importation cost only \$45 per head. Before the arrival of this Asiatic horde, our Assembly passed the "Coolie Bill," which was intended to legalize this speculation in Chinese bones and sinews. While the Bill was under discussion in the Senate, public meetings were held in Sacramento, and the majority of the Assembly denounced. The Governor also sent a special Message to the Legislature, calling upon that body to pass a law to stop the arrival of the Chinese horde. The newspapers gave the alarm throughout the mines. On the Feather, Yuba, American, and southern rivers, meetings of miners have been held, companies of Americans organized, and now the Chinese begin to leave about as fast they arrive. To a man, the Miners are resolved to protect themselves, and in a short time it is to be hoped that California will be free of the scum of China.

This treatment of the Chinese is absolutely necessary, to

make room for the thousands of Americans that are emigrating to California this year. Every steamship from Panama and San Juan del Sud is loaded to the very water's edge with passengers. An old mountaineer reports to the Marysville Herald, that there are 75,000 persons on their way over the plains. It is too late now, to tell half of this tremendous emigration to stop and stay at home till another year, before the men composing it try their fortunes in California. They have started, and come they will and come they must, less the number that will be left to bleach on the sand deserts of the great overland route. But, why is all this sudden rush? Do the people East think that all the gold in California will be dug in one year, and that they must rush like death on his pale horse, for fear that they shall not get their thimble full of the shining dust? Strange infatuation! The California gold mines are as enduring as the coal mines of Pennsylvania. The banks along our rivers and water courses are pretty well dug over, and that is about all that has been done. There are still surface diggings all over our hills and mountains, which will be worked as soon as men of capital dig ditches to take water to them. The beds of the rivers are not yet dug out by considerable if not more. But, what makes our gold mines enduring as time is the innumerable quartz veins all over the whole gold region. Quartz mining is in its incipient stage, the machinery is yet very imperfect; but, wherever it is made to work, the profits are enormous.

But it requires capital and associated labor to work in quartz veins. One quartz mill is in successful operation some five miles from this Bar. The mill and race cost \$20,000; but with only six stampers, this mill turns out from \$500 to \$1000, for every 24 hours of running time. The company, 40 in number, are increasing the number of stampers twenty-four, when the profits will be much greater. Here is a certain thing for 50 or 100 years. But, you see that it requires capital to mine now. I speak decidedly on this point, because I see so many newcomers arriving every day without a dollar in their pocket,

enquiring for a chance to get claims! Of course all these newcomers have to work by the day at what they can get to do, whether they have been accustomed or not to labor. Some of our acquaintances from Jackson, who have just arrived here, if they write home at all, or if they write the truth, I rather guess will corroborate with what I am saying on this subject so far as working by the day is concerned. When the stomach takes up the argument of bread or no bread, there appears to be no alternative but hard labor. No man ought to even think of starting for California, unless he has at the least calculation from \$500 to \$1000. If he starts with less, he has slim chance. Experience is a severe teacher, but a very good one.

Yours truly,

Thomas S. Myrick.



July 21, 1852.

Park's Bar, Yuba Co.,

May 23rd, 1852.

Friend DeLand: Last week I received a bundle of newspapers, for which I thank my Jackson friends.

It seems that a very large emigration is coming from Michigan to California during the present year. In the rush to come here, I am somewhat fearful that some of our acquaintances will leave home without money or means sufficient for their long journey, and also for a good start after they get here. Enough has been said to prevent our friends from rushing into poverty and ruin; but, if they are determined to rush on recklessly and heedlessly after gold, they alone must abide by the consequences. Probably there is no part of the Union, which affords such inducements to a steady emigration as California; but, the wholesale rush of people here this year must be highly detrimental to themselves and embarrassing to the resources of the State.

I learn from some friends just arrived here from Jackson, that very wrong impressions are current there respecting mining, farming, and wages of laborers. Those who have a

desire to come here after gold, ought certainly to know the true situation of business affairs before they venture on so great an undertaking. Quartz mining requires a heavy capital to purchase and erect machinery; so that only monied men can engage in that branch of mining. River claims are mostly located by companies on all our water courses. It requires money to buy shares, and also money to work them before a profit can be realized. Bank claims all have owners, and a price set on their valuation. A new-comer can do nothing in buying a claim and the most simple machinery, without at least from \$100 to \$500, after he is in the mines and ready to work. Wages in the mines are now \$4 for new-comers and \$5 for old miners per day without board, or \$3 per day and board. Board is \$8, \$9 and \$10 per week. A man can board himself for about \$5 per week. Men who are compelled to work by the day, and thousands are situated thus, can rarely get steady work. If they are employed one half of the time, they are certainly fortunate.

Every week scores of new-comers and old miners come on to the Bar in search of work by the day, and being disappointed either start for some other mining location or else leave the mines in disgust to search for work among the farmers in the valleys. Wages are falling very fast in the valleys. Although it is now the commencement of haying and harvest, still farmers can get men enough to work for \$50 per month and board. Only favorite hands get higher wages. Good mowers may get as high as \$3 per day and board. Harvest work will not last long and then there will be another rush of men for labor in the mines. Labor in the mines is now reduced to so much of a system, that it is a pretty tight fit for a young man who has been a clerk in some store, to use his pick and shovel by the side of an old miner. If a new-comer has just money enough to reach the mines, and his stomach takes up the argument of cupboard or no cupboard, he will dig if he can only earn his board. And strange as it may seem, there are new-comers on this Bar, who can hardly earn enough to pay their board as it becomes due

on every Sunday; because they have no money to buy claims that are worth any thing, and they cannot get work by the day. Now, if any more young men from Michigan think of coming here short of money, they deserve to have hard times.

Messrs. H. B. Lathrop and E. S. Lathrop and lady, have arrived at Marysville. Messrs. Lucien H. Tisdale of Jackson, and Harmon of Detroit left this Bar on Friday morning last for Downieville, 57 miles above this Bar on the Yuba. They started on foot, with their packs on their backs. They have good courage in the hunt for gold. Mr. George Blackman is on this Bar. I hear of Michigan "boys" in different mining sections; and they are coming in now about as fast as Missourians came over in 1849.

Yours truly,
Thomas S. Myrick



September 15, 1852. Park's Bar, Yuba, Co., July 26th, 1852.

Friend DeLand: In reference to politics the Whigs here are anxiously waiting to hear of the nomination of Winfield Scott for the Presidency, and of some good Southern man for the Vice-Presidency. You remember that when James K. Polk was nominated, everybody was expecting the re-nomination of Martin Van Buren. Indeed, when the news of the nomination was brought into Jackson, a thorough loco shouted "Hurrah for Van Buren." When disabused of his mistake, he replied, "James K. Polk? What State did you say he was from?" From Tennessee. "Hurrah for James K. Polk of Tennessee. Just the man we expected!" So it is this year. When the news reached the diggings here, the cry was, "Who is Franklin Pierce? I don't know Franklin Pierce." No hurrah and no rally could be raised to respond to the nomination. If Winfield Scott is nominated, we can give the Locos a Lundy's Lane charge of defeat. No man but Winfield Scott can be elected. We know him. Everybody has heard of him. His name is a watchword of glory

with every hardy miner of the golden fields of California.

Mining is now mostly confined to the rivers and their banks. The water of the Yuba is very low. River companies are actively preparing their races and flumes for turning the river into them. For about 80 miles, sections of the Yuba will be drained this year. For some 10 miles above and below Downieville, there is a continuous flume of California pine. At Good-year's Bar, Foster's Bar, Goodhue's Bar, Industry Bar, Ladue's Bar, and in their vicinity, immense preparations have been made for fluming the river. On Park's Bar, there are seven companies of over 140 shares, that have one continuous race of about one mile in length, reaching the whole length of the Bar. The shares are worth now from \$200 to \$2000 each, according to the location of the claim. This week the companies are building their dam; and next week the river will be turned. Then the pick and shovel will be well used in the bed of the river.

There has been great improvement, during the past year, in the habits of miners, and in their manner of living. Taking this Bar for an example, instead of poor tents and light cloth-covered houses, good framed buildings, covered with California pine, have been erected during the present year. Boarding houses have excellent accommodations. The price of board is from \$8 to \$15 per week. Wages are \$5 per day. There is a Sunday School and preaching every Sunday. Miners wear fine clothing and are careful in their habits of living. Last Sunday I saw a larger contribution raised for a Sunday School Library than I ever saw collected at one time in the Brick Church at Jackson. Drinking saloons and gambling houses are larger and commodious. All places of amusement and instruction are well supported here—on every evening of the week. The Alleghanians were here two weeks ago, and sang to crowded houses two evenings. They have come again, and they are to sing to-night. A ticket is only \$2. These Minstrels have sung at San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, and Nevada with great

success. From here they go to Downieville, to stir up the mountaineers with their songs of liberty and home. Miss Goodenow's portrait is now in every saloon.

Edward Morey of Kalamazoo, came here on Thursday last, and commenced work for one of the river companies on Friday. At about 3 P.M. of the latter day, he was attacked by what is called "sun strike," and died in an hour. The thermometer was at 115 degrees in the shade, and 125 in the sun at 2 o'clock P.M. A Frenchman also died the same afternoon of the same cause, while setting on the rocks, by the river fishing. A third man was killed, and a fourth lost the use of his arms, by the premature discharge of a blast while they were tamping it. Messrs. Hughes and Thomas of Eaton Co., and Messrs. Blackman, Coolbaugh and myself, were working near with 50 others; but we all fortunately escaped unhurt. More or less accidents are daily happening by carelessness in the use of gunpowder, while men are blasting rocks for races.

The emigration over the Plains begins to arrive. Last week the advanced company reached this Bar. A man who went east after his wife, has returned safe, bringing his family and stock. He is off for the great Sacramento valley for a farm. Thousands of men, with their families and stock are reported to be coming in as fast as possible. They are all after farms in the rich valleys of California. It is said that there are 60,000 persons on the plains. As yet I have heard of no suffering among the emigration; but the advance trains report that the large number of stock driven over the Plains is mowing down the grass all along the route. The relief trains, which have been sent out by appropriations of our last Legislature, have reached the Mormon Station, on their way to the Humbolt river, where they will prepare the emigration to cross the great desert into Carson Valley. Up to this time, there has been nothing of the suffering and destitution on the Plains, that there has been along the Isthmus route. Those who come by the Plains are also better prepared for work and labor when they arrive here, than those

who have been shut up on board of crowded ships for two or three months.

By the next steamer I hope to give you additional news.
Yours truly,
T. S. Myrick.



September 21, 1852.

August 4th, 1852.

French, Corral, Nevada Co.

Friend DeLand: This place is a mining town, three miles south of the Yuba river, and between its middle and south branches. It is thirty-six miles from Marysville, and twenty miles from Parks' Bar. Four weeks ago there were seven hotels and six stores, besides mechanic shops, markets, and private residences. The buildings were constructed of pine lumber. But by the carelessness of a teamster in leaving a burning candle in the livery stable, two thirds of the town was reduced to ashes in less than one hour from the first alarm of fire. The land breeze was sweeping down from the mountains. The stable was on the windward side. Men, women and children rushed from their beds to the sidehill above the town, to see their hard earned property swept away by the unextinguishable midnight fire. The whole loss was \$50,000; of course there was no insurance. The town is being built up again.

The mining business consists of hill diggings. At the head of a large ravine, rich leads were discovered in 1851. By sinking shaft, from 20 to 50 feet deep, leads were found to be extensive. Two ditches were dug for water to supply sluices, one six and the other thirty miles in length; the first at a cost of \$5,000 and the latter at a cost of \$50,000. These ditches supply twenty sluices during nine or ten months of the year. The claims are valuable. One company of four men values their claims at \$6,000. With one sluice they average \$100 per day, or \$25 per man. This company has about two years' more work on hand. It costs about \$1,000 to open new claims. I have worked five

months for a company here, that has averaged \$20 per day to the man. The claims were held at \$3,000. A man from Wisconsin, by the name of Twist, has just gone home with \$15,000, which he has made in less than two years. A man from Illinois, by the name of Aldrich, has made nearly \$20,000 by keeping a hotel, losing also nine by the fire. Men who have made money in mining watched by their claims nearly a year, from their location till water was brought in by the ditch companies. Wages here are \$5 per day. Three companies own a large sluice one mile in length, which runs from the head of the diggings down the large ravine. The short sluices from the hill cuts empty into this large sluice. These companies have realized about \$1,000 a week each without much labor. Pine lumber for sluices is worth \$50 per 1000 feet. A steam saw mill has been in operation here during the year.

Our company having stopped work for want of water last week, I took a walk of about 20 miles higher up in the mountains. Two miles from the Corral, near Adsits store, there are three companies opening rich hill diggings. They have three months work before them, in opening their cuts into their leads, before they can lay down their sluices; but, then, they have a prospect of \$20 a day, at Sweetland's two miles from Adsits, other companies are also opening leads, which prospect well. From this place I went to a new town, which has been built up in six months, called San Juan, 9 miles from the Corral. Here are extensive hill diggings, a ditch of several miles has been dug to convey water; the ground has been prospected; and soon as the rainy season commences, business will open in good earnest. In all the leads opened between the South and Middle Yubas, the gold is fine scale, requiring the use of quicksilver in the sluices.

The next mining locality I visited is Hess Crossing on the Middle Yubas. The work is confined to the banks of the river, which are from 10 to 20 feet deep. The average product is from \$5 to \$10 a day per man. There is a large flat of unclaimed

ground at Hess that will pay from \$3 to \$5 per day, that is not worked now on account of high prices. There are two hotels and three stores at the Crossing. Mr. Hess has gone to Ohio after a wife, to preside in his hotel. He has built an excellent bridge across the river above high water mark, and constructed a good wagon road from the Crossing up the mountain on each side of the river. A line of stages is soon to be placed on this route from Marysville to Downieville.

From the Crossing I traveled along the wagon road up the ridge between the North Yuba and Little Yuba, which latter stream empties into the Middle Yuba, when I came to the intersection of the wagon road with the great mule trail from Marysville by Foster's Bar to Downieville. This mule trail is perfectly thronged with trains at all hours of the day. It is a fine sight to see a train of 100 mules loaded with merchandise winding up the mountain sides at early day, or preparing for a camping ground at night. The tall pines protect them from the noontide sun and nightly dews. After leaving the hot and arid plains below, the pure mountain air is invigorating both to man and mule. The mountain streams need no Sitka or Boston ice to cool their pure liquid; for the eternal snows of the Sierra furnish a constant supply.

At Camptonville, six miles from Hess Crossing, and seven from Foster's Bar, I struck upon a newly discovered mining country known as Gold Ridge. As far as prospected, this mining district is about five miles in extent. Hill diggings were first discovered there about six months ago. Leads have been opened at Camptonville, Horse Valley, Oak Valley, and Railroad Hill. Six ditches are already either completed or in progress. At Camptonville and Railroad Hill hotels are being erected, and all sorts of buildings are going up with a rush. At the first named place, a large steam saw-mill is just ready for operation. But what pine timber! Pines six and seven feet in diameter are common. Rived clapboards are worth \$20 per 1000. It is some work to clear off these pines from mining claims. At Campton-

ville the diggings are from forty to fifty feet deep; but the dirt is a red or yellow gravel, and is sluiced from top to bottom. On the bed-rock "big-licks" are found. It takes men of capital to operate in such mining ground. But, Gold Ridge is the place to get away from the scorching sun of the valleys or river banks.

But, this last paragraph I will devote to politics. The Whigs and Locos are actively engaged in a State Canvass. The election of State officers is to take place the first week in September. Gov. Bigler and his friends have been renominated by the Locos. Capt. William Waldo and others like him have been nominated by the Whigs. A great many Locos have declared for Waldo. They charge Gov. Bigler's administration with having increased the State debt nearly \$2,000,000—making the State indebtedness about \$4,500,000. Whigs and bolted Democrats are out strong for Waldo. The Simon pure public-plunder Locos are pretty badly frightened,—if not beaten! One thing is significant. The *Alta California*, and the *San Francisco Herald*, two large dailies, edited by independent Democrats, are down on the Bigler nominations, and in favor of the Waldo ticket. Capt. Waldo advanced some \$27,000 to help in the overland emigration of 1850. The Legislature has repaid him, and the people want him to be Governor. California does look a little Whiggish.



October 27, 1852.

Park's Bar,

Sept. 12th, 1852

Friend DeLand: By a late number of the "Citizen" I learn that the same enthusiasm is pervading the States east of the Rocky Mountains, in the present political canvass as in the ever glorious campaign of 1840. You may be assured that on the Pacific side of the Union, the Whigs present one solid phalanx, There is no bolting here from the Whig party. There are thousands in California whom Scott led on to victory and glory in his conquering march from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, and they all to a man hurrah for "Old Chapultepec." Our

State, Congressional, and County nominations are all made, and our candidates are all in the field, and are stumping it all over the State, from the Oregon line to San Diego, and from San Francisco to the ridge of the Sierra Nevada. Everywhere Whig documents are thrown broadcast. Unfortunately for themselves, the locos made bad nominations at their Benicia State Convention, and General "Bolting is drawing off a large division of their forces.

The river companies on the Yuba are just getting into their claims. Races, Flumes, and dams are mostly constructed, and the bed of the river is laid bare in sections, for a distance of 80 miles. The expense of working river claims is great. Where the banks are low, races are dug to convey the water. On Park's Bar six companies have united in the construction of one continuous race, the whole length of the Bar, a distance of one mile, having one head and one foot dam. Each company has also constructed a waste water flume of pine lumber, to carry off surplus and leakage water. Each one also has a large water wheel and chain-pump, propelled by water from the race. As fast as each company pumps the surplus water from its claim, long-toms, and quicksilver machines are worked day and night. Wages are \$5 per day. Board is \$8 and \$10 per week. Higher up the river, where the banks are rocky and precipitous, races and flumes are built entirely of Pine Lumber, mostly sawed by hand, except at a few places where saw mills have been erected.

The overland emigration continues to arrive. There is much less suffering and destitution this year than there was in 1850. The State Relief Trains are constantly transporting provisions and water to places on the Great Desert between Carson Valley and the Humboldt River. Large numbers of stock are being driven into different valleys. The mountain valleys contain good grass, and stock fattens very quickly. A day or two since, I heard of one party that had arrived with a large number of milch cows, who are grazing them in the American Valley between the Yuba and Feather rivers, and selling milk at 25

cents a quart, at the different mining localities in the vicinity of that valley.

On Saturday the 14th inst., the cholera broke out at Barton's Bar, three miles above Park's Bar. But of a population of 250 persons there were 25 deaths in 5 days. There were several physicians in attendance, but all who were taken died in 6 hours after the attack, excepting 2 persons. After the first thunder-bolt, all but twenty persons hastily left the Bar, excepting those attacked. Nowhere else on the Yuba, has the cholera appeared, but there have been many cases at Marysville and Sacramento. A man named Hagard, of Michigan, died at Barton's. The weather is very hot. Yesterday the thermometer was at 100 degrees in the shade on this Bar! Realize working in the sun with the Mercury at 125 if you can.

Yours truly,
T. S. Myrick.



December 28, 1852. Marysville,

Nov. 11th, 1852.

Friend DeLand: The election is over, and the returns have come in sufficiently so that the result is known. California is locofoco by over 4000 majority. Throughout the whole mining counties, the Whig vote has been more than in the State Election of last year: but in San Francisco City and County, divisions among the Whigs have given the State to the locofocos. In the city of San Francisco, where we ought to have had 1500 majority, we had only about 80 majority, while the locos carried that county by 67 majority. Sacramento county last year went 400 loco; but this year it was 345 whig. Yuba county is only 152 loco. Marysville is 67 whig. Returns have come in from 25 counties, of which twenty are loco, and five whig. In these counties the vote is 4758 loco, and 537 whig; loco majority 4221. The other counties will not vary the result 100 votes either way. We give it up. "We have met the enemy," and we are theirs. The vote throughout the State has been a party one, except in

San Francisco, where all sorts of tickets were run. Regular whig—regular Democratic—Union Whig and Democratic—Independent Whig—Independent Democratic—and Free Soil. The whigs lost everything except city officers, by splitting, and even some of these. Now, Friend DeLand, send up the political news from the Atlantic slope. We weaken, we dry up on the Pacific side.

Mining in the rivers is over for this season. Last night the rainy season commenced in good earnest. Today the rain pours down steadily. For the last week or two, miners have been coming down from the mountains,—some for the Eastern States, and others for dry diggings. On the Feather and Yuba rivers, miners have had every variety of fortune. While some have made large sums of money out of river claims, others have lost all that they invested. So it goes. The goddess of Fortune is a fickle jade. To show you how uncertain is mining, I will give the history of two river claims on Park's Bar. The Park's Bar Company's Claims, having 30 Shares, was valued at 1500 per share last June and in July at \$2000. The expense of holding and working these claims has been over \$1200 per share. Nothing has been found in the claim this season, and last week quite a number of the shares were sold at auction for \$50 per share. One poor fellow, who had invested his all in a share, sold his interest for \$10, and started for San Francisco to ship before the mast for \$20 per month. Now, look on the other side of the picture. The Mobile Company's Claim on the same Bar, having only seven shares, was held at only some \$1000 per share. It cost the whole Company only \$12,000 for race, flumes, dam, pumps and machines. The first week's work paid all expenses, and made a small dividend. The Company has divided over \$10,000 per share. Not one quarter of the claim has been worked out. Shares cannot be bought for any price. In locating river claims there is every hazard, because they cannot be prospected with much certainty until the water is turned out of the river's bed. The best 24 hours work in the Mobile Com-

pany's Claim was 73 pounds with one pair of double Quick-silver machines, That is the best work that I have ever seen or heard of on the Yuba river.

Miners will have a better chance in dry diggings this winter than they had last year, because Companies have been, and are now engaged in digging ditches to convey water from the rivers to localities, where there is paying dirt which cannot be washed without a steady supply of water. These ditches are numerous from the Feather to the San Joaquin. Thousands of dollars have been expended in their construction. They enable miners to turn from wet to dry diggings, without prospecting one half the gold regions, to find some ravine where wages can be made during December and March, the two principal rainy months of the season. These ditches furnish water for surface and coyote diggings. The first is indicated by its name, and the second also, because the coyote wolf, which is common here, digs its hold in the ground. Some coyote mining holes are from 50 to 70 feet deep, like a well, or from 100 to 500 feet into the side of a hill. The coyote mining I dislike, quite as much as the practice of the coyote wolf, that seeks the graveyard of some mining locality and makes its burrow by the coffin of some poor fellow who failed to realize his golden dreams of a life in California.

The agricultural interest has been as profitable in California as at any other time during the year 1852. Farmers on the Feather and Yuba bottom grounds have made more money by raising produce and selling it in the different mining localities than a majority of those who have depended on mining. There is nothing uncertain in agriculture here, if proper attention is paid to the seasons. I notice that the farmers about Marysville pay no attention to manuring their land, which is evidence of its quality and richness. Those who have stables in the city haul manure out on the open plain, to get it out of the way, while farmers might have it for the carting. The land along the rivers will produce enormous crops,—so much to the

acre that an Eastern or Michigan farmer will hardly believe his own eyes and even then he is incredulous, because it is hard to convince a man against his will. Lately I have seen large droves of cattle just in from the Plains. They are all in poor flesh; but with three months pasturing they will bring their owners fortunes. A number of miners have gone East this Fall, to purchase and drive over the Plains next Summer droves of stock. Money will be made at that business for years to come. A great many horses are required for the numerous stage lines all through the valley and mountains, and there must be a large supply to meet the demand. Now, stock that has just come in from the Plains is cheap, but next Spring it will be of high price. It has been so for the last two years.

Probably you have heard accounts of the great Sacramento fire which occurred on the night of the 2nd of this month. All the business part of the city was entirely consumed. As many as 15,000 men, women and children were turned out upon the levee, with nothing to protect or feed them. The whole city was in flames at once, the wind blowing a perfect gale. All idea of saving property was out of the question. Men tried to save their wives and children; and those who had no families were anxious for the safety of dear self. The rushing torrent of fire rolled from square to square and from street to street, devouring everything in its resistless progress. Framed buildings and their contents were swept away like chaff before a tempest. Fire-proof hotels, stores and banking houses melted down like lead in the crucible of a furnace. Several lives were lost, by being too tardy in the escape from destruction. What a night of desolation. The steamboats at the levee were filled with women and children, that crowded their cabins and decks in exhausted slumber. The bare levee afforded a bed for the thousands of men who could not close their sleepless eyelids upon the smouldering ruins of their hard earned fortunes. The morn came! Bread sold at \$2.50 per loaf, and Coffee at 50 cts. a cup. Speculators rushed hither and thither to buy up all the

lumber and building materials in the country. Lumber rose to \$2.50 per foot. Produce was rushed up from San Francisco. The city of Sacramento is being built up again. On Sunday last one whole square was also burned in Marysville—the “New World” square—loss is \$40,000—no lives lost—no stores burned.

Yours truly,

T. S. Myrick.



January 19, 1853

Auburn, Placer Co.

Nov. 26th, 1852

Friend DeLand:—The last letter I wrote to you was dated at Marysville, soon after the fire at that place and Sacramento. At Marysville, I visited some time with Messrs. J. Ford, E. Lathrop, and L. J. Fish. They are prospering as usual. Mr. I. Cole came down from Shasta, having closed up his Summer's mining there. He left Messrs. Philo and Homer Curtiss, Phineas Ford, and the Bronsons all well.—The new-comers were wide awake for their success in the diggings. Mr. Cole left for San Francisco. Mr. O. Freeman came down from the City of Seventy-Six, and left for Sacramento. It gave me great pleasure to visit friends from Jackson County.

Last week I left Marysville for this place, the distance being 42 miles by stage. All along the Yuba River, there are excellent and well cultivated farms. Farmers are beginning to plough and sow. Between the Yuba and Bear Rivers, there is a wide expanse of plain, which is mostly barren for the want of water. Thousands of acres might be cultivated, if ditches were dug for water courses, so that the land might be irrigated. On the banks of Bear River, a fordable stream, farms are under cultivation, as far as the eye can extend. The soil is a sandy loam. The original sod is easily broken up; one team being sufficient for the purpose. The Bear River Hotel is a neat two story building, where the Auburn, Nevada, Marysville and Sacramento stages change horses. Travelers are well accommodated. Soon after leaving Bear River, the road begins to wind among the foot-hills of the mountains.

We dined at Gold Hill, a new mining town that is only one month old. Mechanics were busy erecting the hotels, the stores and other buildings of the town. Everything seemed to be full of life and animation. The diggings consist of hill, flat, and ravine claims. There is no mining there yet, for want of water; but in a short time a ditch will be dug to Gold Hill, to supply water for mining purposes. The owners of the best hill claim have refused \$2000 for a one-fourth interest. The next mining town is Doty's Flat, consisting of ravine and surface diggings. The third town in order is Ophir a neat little town on the Rich Ravine. There are three or four hotels, a dozen stores, a number of mechanic shops, gambling houses &c., &c. Near Ophir is Dutch Ravine, and New Castle, or Secret Diggings. Indeed all the way from Gold Hill to Auburn, about 8 miles, there are log cabins and tents in every ravine and on every flat, where two-cent dirt can be found.

Auburn is the County Seat of Placer County and is a town of 2000 inhabitants. There are two large hotels, besides a dozen small ones. There are stores, gambling houses, mechanic shops, and all other buildings necessary to the completion of a mining town. This place has obtained its celebrity from its rich ravine diggings. Many a man has made his pile out of Rich Ravine, and gone home. But the rich ravines around Auburn have been worked over and over again, till now a miner is lucky if he can strike a lead that will pay him \$5 per day. In the vicinity of Auburn are Spanish Flat, Humbug Flat, and Miller Town, all old mining places. The Bear River Water Company have brought water from near the source of Bear river, a distance of 22 miles, in a ditch or canal, to supply miners with water, for the purpose of enabling them to sluice-wash the surface dirt of the hills and flats. The canal has cost over \$400,000. The water is sold at \$1 per inch; it requiring 6 inches for a sluice-head. The gold is coarse. It prospects from one cent to one dollar per pan. All the best ground around Auburn is claimed. A new comer stands a poor show, to get a claim, unless he has

money to purchase ground which has been claimed by speculators for nearly a year. The best claim that I have heard of during a week's stay here gives \$10 per day per man. Day wages are only \$4 per day, and 500 applicants to one chance to work.

I have never seen such a rush to any mining locality as there has been here for a week past; since the Gold Lake humbug of 1850. The hotels are more than full and overflowing. If a man gets a seat at the 2d, 3d, or 4th table, he is lucky. A bed is nearly out of the question.—The stages arrive every evening with from 15 to 20 passengers each, besides lots of men on foot. As soon as the people arrive, they commence prospecting all over the hills and flats along the line of the Bear River Canal for a week or so, and then either locate or leave for other diggings. The stages leaving as crowded with passengers as those arriving. The tide of prospectors for winter diggings ebbs and flows regularly every twenty-four hours. As a sample of what can be made here by those who own claims three Michigan men today have taken out about \$20 with a sluice-tom. I hear of some companies that are taking out from \$3- to \$50 a day with sluice-toms.

Among those whom I have met during the past week, are a number of men from Jackson County, to wit: Messrs. Volney Wakeman, Fuller, J. Davis, L. True, Ranney, Wheeler, E. E. Prescott, Isaac Allen, (Hickory) Wood, Jesse Hurd, Cook, Peter Burrill, and George Blackman. These friends have come from Summer diggings to prospect for winter. This morning all left for other places, excepting G. Blackman. Every man goes on his own hook in this country.

Some of our friends have made rich strikes, and all have earned more than they would have done at home. They are all well, that is, they eat heartily, tramp over the mountains 20 or 30 miles a day, and sleep soundly on their blankets at night. Some of the boys' dust bags contained over \$1000 each. The Wolverines will get their share of the gold. Messrs. W. Monroe, Henry Monroe, Isaac W. Tidd, and R. Chamberlain and wife

live here. Messrs. Tidd and Monroe work at their trades. Mr. Tidd has just completed the "Empire," one of the finest and best hotels in the State,—the best that I have seen in the mountains. He is now with a company building a Steam Saw-Mill near this place. California pine lumber is \$80 per 1000 feet at the mills. He is sure of his pile. Mr. Chamberlain has built for himself and family a neat house of pine, and with his wife he will do well enough. She earns \$5 per day with her own work. A man with a wife in this country can engage in any business he pleases.—Some two weeks ago, Messrs. Claflin and Blackman were prospecting on the Mokotamhe river, and at Butte City, Calaveras country, they had the pleasure of meeting Messrs. Horace Hulin and Buck. They are mining. Mr. Buck's three brothers have arrived there. Mr. E. B. Chapman is at Park's Bar, and is mining. Mr. R. L. Myrick is at Sonora, in the printing business, and is doing well. Mr. Washburn owns one third of a large farm on the Feather River, six miles above Marysville. He told me that he had cleared over \$5000 for his share this year. He is sowing 100 acres of barley, some fifty acres of wheat, and several acres of garden vegetables. He thinks that California beats Michigan "all to death" on farming. He can raise 80 bushels of barley to the acre. Mr. Henry Lathrop and wife are at Wyandotte, near the Feather River. He was fortunate in coming through with his team, and keeping it. Hauling goods to the miners is better than mining.

T.S.M.



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